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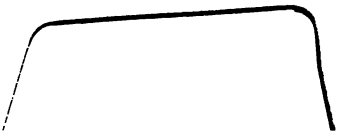
HUNTERS
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HUNTERS AND FISHERS:

OR,

SKETCHES OF PRIMITIVE RACES IN THE LANDS BEYOND THE SEA.

BY MRS. PERCY SINNETT.



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PREFACE.

MY design in this little work has been to exhibit, as far as possible within such narrow limits, the general characteristics of the earliest stage of human society, as illustrated in the present condition of the inhabitants of various parts of the world; seeking not in geographical position, but in similarity of social state, the principle of classification. It is intended to be followed by two other volumes, descriptive of more advanced grades of civilisation. I have addressed principally the younger class of intelligent readers,—as I believe that they are much more capable of occupying themselves with subjects of serious interest than is generally supposed, provided there be nothing in the mode of treatment to render them repulsive; but, from the size of the book, it will be evident, that my aim has been rather to awaken interest than to afford complete information, of which there are already abundant sources.

To the next generation, even more than to this, the character and mode of life of the inhabitants of distant parts of the earth, will become an object of increasing interest; as in the rapid extension of all means of communication, all relations with them will be daily multiplied.

Even at the present day civilisation is brought continually more face to face with savage life; and it becomes, therefore, more desirable to understand distinctly what that life is, and what are the duties of mature nations towards those members of the great family, who are still in infancy.

The attempt often made to exalt what are thought to be the virtues of a low and rude condition of society, originated with some eloquent French writers of the last century, whose immediate object it was to put to shame the vices of a corrupt and false cultivation; and it might, perhaps, have answered this temporary purpose among a people so ignorant of the manners of distant countries as the Parisians of that period, but the theory could never stand the test of examination for a moment.

Those best acquainted with savage life well know that not merely the vices which arise out of violent and brutal instincts, but even the follies and frivolities of fashionable life, have their counterparts among the rudest tribes of the wilderness. The toilet of the Pawnee dandy, as described by the Hon. C. Murray, in his travels in America, outdoes not merely that of the greatest exquisite of our day, but even of my Lord Foppington himself, for the time and labour it requires; and the Indian woman, who squeezes the head of her child between two boards, or distends

her lip with a huge piece of bone, till it will hang down low enough to conceal her chin, uses at least as artificial a decoration, as were the hoops and hair powder of the most preposterous period of European dress.

It has been the unprincipled and unjustifiable conduct of civilised nations to the wild tribes, with whom they have come in contact, that has led to the over hasty conclusion that their coming is generally to be regarded as a curse rather than a blessing to the Aboriginal race; and, in many cases, also, to injurious mistakes among the more benevolent and disinterested classes of colonists, who, in their anxiety to avoid exercising undue authority over their simple and ignorant neighbours, have left them too much in possession of a liberty of which they can make but a bad use. In South Australia, for instance, it was adopted as a principle, that there should be no interference in the conduct of the natives towards each other; and that as long as they refrained from molesting the colonists, they should be regarded as perfectly independent of them. In pursuance of this plan whenever an Australian was guilty of any outrage against an English settler, he was punished; but the very same crime committed against an Australian, was passed without notice: and the savage was thence inevitably led to infer, not that robbery and murder were things wrong in themselves, and hateful to Christian people, but that Christian people would, by no means, forgive any wrong done to them.

Whenever a civilised man comes into contact with a savage, he is not only at liberty to exercise over him such authority as

may restrain him from doing evil, but he is even bound to do so; remembering always that such authority is a solemn trust for which he is solemnly responsible. We hear much of native savage tribes dying away, as it is called, before the progress of civilisation; for the weak and the strong cannot subsist together in free and equal relations. The vessel of clay will be shivered by the vessel of iron, if they journey in company. The attempt to treat as on equal terms those so far inferior in knowledge, and, consequently, in power, as savages to civilised men, will mostly end in fraud on one side, and a fierce sense of injury on the other; but let the civilised man openly assume the place that belongs to him, of the ruler and protector of the savage, and he can no longer disguise his avarice and cunning under the plausible pretences of fair trading, but becomes answerable to God and man for the power he cannot but possess over his weaker brother. Let him say what he will, he is "that brother's keeper."

INTRODUCTION.

IT is customary to speak of the time we live in, as a very advanced age of the world, in which men are as wise, and as good, and as happy, as they can ever reasonably expect to be; and to represent the many evils which we still see around us, as natural and unavoidable, and what must always exist.

But if we inquire, we shall find that a great part of the world is still in the wild state in which it has probably been since the Creation. Many immense tracts are still entirely unpeopled; and vast plains and forests in America,

Africa, Australia, and Asia, have no other inhabitants than a few scattered savages. In England, although there are many extensive moors, heaths, and commons, and many noblemen's and gentlemen's parks, on which no corn or other stuff for food is grown, yet for every square mile of land three hundred people are supported. But if we take the whole world together, we shall find not more than twenty people are living for every square mile of land that it contains; yet even England, at present, is very far from being in the best possible condition in this respect, for many improvements might be made, and, no doubt, will be made, in the method of cultivating the ground, by which it could be brought to produce a very much greater quantity of corn and other food, and support a very much greater number of men and animals than it does now. In America the whole number of inhabitants is not more than thirty five millions; and it is calculated, that, without any more knowledge of agriculture than is possessed at present, it would with ease support five hundred millions, that is, a great deal more than half the number of people in the whole world.

We must also recollect, that England, although it has many natural advantages, is by no means the finest and most fertile country in the world by nature; on the contrary, there are many that are beyond all comparison finer: and the superiority of England to so many others, is merely owing to the knowledge and industry of its inhabitants. Now it would be surely strange to suppose, that Providence had intended only England, and a few other countries—mere spots, as compared with the whole extent of the earth—to become highly civilised and intelligent, while all the rest were for ever to remain, more or less, barbarous and savage. Indeed, if we consider how small a number of mankind are yet Christians, even in name, though there is no doubt the Christian religion is intended, sooner or later, to embrace the whole earth, we shall have reason to hope that the present state of the world is very far indeed from being as good as it might and will be made.

Much, very much, is still wrong in England; but if we can imagine the inhabitants of the whole world only as industrious, as orderly, as intelligent, and as well con-

ducted as what we call respectable English men and women, the world would be almost like paradise in comparison with what it is. People born in the advanced countries of Europe, are sometimes disposed to think less of the advantages of civilisation than they ought to do; as we are all apt to underrate the blessings with which we have been long familiar. Some writers have even talked with rapture of the charms of what they called a state of nature; but it does not require much knowledge to discover, that such a state as they meant by that expression—that is, a state in which people perfectly ignorant and uncultivated were perfectly innocent, virtuous, and happy—does not exist on the earth; and we have the Bible and other ancient books to show us, that in the earliest ages of the world it never did.

The true state of nature of man, or any other creature, is that in which the powers and capacities bestowed by the Creator, as part of his nature, are most fully brought into use. To find the state of nature for human creatures, therefore, we must look not back to savage life, but forward to a higher condition of education and culture than

has yet been seen. The difference between these two states is infinitely greater than that between the confined, filthy, and noisome hut, scarcely superior to the den of the wild beast, in which the poor savage crouches to shelter himself from the elements; and the magnificent palace, enriched with every convenience and luxury that intelligence, wealth, and taste can procure, and adorned with pictures and statues, and all the treasures and refinements of art;—and, better than all, the glorious world of thought which is opened to us in books! The superiority of our condition to that of the savage, is no cause for foolish pride, but for humble thankfulness, that "our lines have fallen in pleasant places," and for an earnest and benevolent desire, to do all we can for the good of our fellow creatures.

We must also never forget, that it is not the merely being born in a cultivated community, not the living in a stately house, wearing an elegant dress, and being familiar with the refinements of polished life, that should make the real distinction between us and those whom we call savages! Whenever we yield to passion, without making

any effort at self-control; whenever, in our conduct, we consult only our own desires, think not what is right to do, but what at the moment we like to do; whenever we forget, in low indulgences, the higher purposes of our being, we are, in the sight of Him who sees hearts, no better than savages! Nay, when we consider the opportunities wasted, the English man or woman of the nineteenth century, is in such a case far below the wild Indian or wandering Bushman!



THE FOREST INDIANS OF SOUTH AMERICA.

THERE is not in the world a more lovely country than Brazil,—with a more delightful climate, a more fertile soil, finer rivers, or a greater abundance of everything that is valuable and beautiful. It is clothed with the most luxuriant vegetation; its hills are covered with thick woods, its vallies with unfading verdure; and the most delicious fruits, the most splendid flowers, precious woods, and gold, and gems are found within its limits. It is more than three hundred years since it was visited and taken possession of by a Christian people, who were, at that time, one of the most cultivated nations of Europe; yet thousands of miles are still covered with an impenetrable forest, that hides some of the rudest and wildest races on the face of the earth.

To the inhabitants of highly civilised countries, surrounded constantly by the most admirable productions of human intellect and human power, and where man appears

indeed as the lord of the material world, it is strange to contemplate him in this poor, rude, and feeble condition, contrasted as it is by the grandeur and luxuriant beauty of nature, and the richness and vigour of animal life. All travellers who have visited them speak in raptures of the primeval forests of Brazil. The trees shoot up to the most majestic height, and over every stem is poured a profusion of verdant, flowering, parasite plants, presenting an infinite diversity of leaves and blossoms. The trees themselves, too, are so various that almost every one presents a separate picture. The silk cotton tree rises to a considerable height before it begins to spread out its thick arms, adorned with light, airy masses of leaves; while below it the boughs of the luxuriant *lecythis* and Brazilian *anda* form a green arcade, and the large gold-coloured flowers of the *jacaranda* dazzlingly contrast with its dark green foliage. The trumpet tree, with its smooth ash grey stems, rears its lofty form, and extends its branches at right angles, from which depend large tufts of white flowers; and the airy laurel, the slender cedar, the soap tree, with its shining leaves, the sapuyaca, which in the spring shoots forth foliage of a rose colour, and the dark Chilian fir, present an infinite diversity of forms and tints, while over all wave the feathery crowns of the towering palms. The ground beneath is clothed with the richest verdure, and the most splendid variety of flowers.

The animal kingdom, too, is no less flourishing and vigorous. The tapir, the slender deer, the timid agouti and pecari graze around; the nasua and the opossum steal through the wood; and troops of squirrels and monkeys leap, whistling and chattering, from tree to tree; while parrots, green, blue, and red, fill the air with their screams; and pigeons, and other birds of the most superb plumage, flutter through the fragrant bushes. The air is all alive, too, with insects: wasps leave their long pendent nests, and ants issue from their curious dwellings, at dawn, to commence the labours of the day; gay butterflies, rivalling the colours of the rainbow, flutter from flower to flower; the blue shining Menelaus, the bluish white Idea, and the large Eurylochus, hover between the bushes of the moist valleys; myriads of the most brilliant beetles buzz in the air, and sparkle like jewels on the fresh green leaves and fragrant flowers; and serpents, whose gorgeous hues even exceed those of the flowers, glide out of the holes in the ground and hollows of the trees, to bask in the sun.

In some parts of these forests, where the huge trunks of the colossal trees are woven together by gigantic parasitical plants, with stems of the thickness of a man's thigh, no ray of sunlight ever penetrates the dense mass of foliage; and the very weeds and nettles resemble forest trees more than anything which we are in the habit of calling by those names. The hoary trunk, which, whether

struck by lightning, or torn up by a tempest or a rushing flood, has fallen on the ground, lies where it falls; and from its decay and corruption shoot forth new and beautiful plants of the orchidaceous species, while its branches and fibres furnish materials for huts and various implements to the men of the woods.

Some of the wildest of these forest Indians are found in the Brazilian province of Minas Geraes; they are short, thick, and strongly made, of a copper colour, with low foreheads, broad, flat faces, and black, straight hair, cut excessively short, probably to prevent its entangling in the trees. They are strong and nimble, capable of running in seasons of fiercest heat up and down hills, of piercing through the most entangled forests and jungles, of wading through, or swimming across, rivers, and of enduring fatigue and long watching to a degree that to us seems almost incredible; their memories are strong, and their powers of observation, in matters connected with the hunter's life, remarkably quick. The slightest traces on the surface of the ground, or on the trunks of trees, so slight as to be often entirely invisible to a European, are to them plain and legible as the letters of our alphabet to us. For all beyond this their faculties appear to be wrapt in as impenetrable a sleep as those of a new-born infant. They have no thought for yesterday or to-morrow, and, though occasionally bursting into violent

fits of rage, are, for the most part, stupidly indifferent to joy or sorrow; selling or killing their children, and torturing animals with the most perfect stony indifference.

The habitations of the Puris, who are among the wildest of these tribes, are more like the nests of birds than what we should consider human dwellings; they consist merely of a sort of net woven from the fibres of various plants, and fastened between two trunks of trees (probably in imitation of the spider's web), with a cross pole above, against which great palm leaves, with their stems stuck in the ground, are so placed as to form a screen on the side next the wind. On the ground, near a little fire, generally lie a few gourds, a little wax, reeds for arrows or arrow-heads, and some bananas or other fruits; the bow and arrows of the father of the family lean against a tree; some feathers and trifles used as ornaments are scattered around; and some poor meagre dogs keep watch on the property, and give warning of the approach of a stranger. The dusky tenants of these leafy abodes are entirely naked, and in bad weather try to preserve their warmth by huddling close together, or covering themselves with ashes. The fire is never let out, as it has the double advantage of supplying, in some measure, the place of clothing, and of keeping off the wild beasts. Other tribes construct a sort of hut, by tying together the tops of young trees, bending them down, and covering the whole with cocoa or pattioba leaves. These are sometimes

made large enough to hold several families; but have no other furniture than some large stones, used for breaking open the cocoa-nuts, or between which fire is kindled. Their bows and arrows, and other little possessions, always lie on the bare ground.

The huts of another tribe, the *Coroados*, are described by travellers as a step above these in convenience. They are constructed with upright poles, of from twelve to fifteen feet high, plaited together with twigs, plastered with clay; these walls extend to a length of thirty feet, and are furnished with two doors, one on either side, while the roof is covered with a thatch of straw and palm leaves. These large huts are usually the joint work of several families, each of whom have a separate fireplace. Some of these people have sleeping-places, made with straw and leaves, on the ground; others have a net, slung between four stakes; but the children are left to lie on the ground, with the dogs.

All these tribes go perfectly naked, and even exhibited a sort of shame at the notion of wearing clothes, when some missionaries, who went among them, attempted to persuade them to do so. They were sometimes met with the shirts that had been given them rolled up tight under their arms.

As the need of food is the first want of human nature, the supply of it, by some means or other, is the first em-

ployment of human faculties. To the tribes we are speaking of, the forest generally furnishes a sufficient number of animals, although it does occasionally happen that they suffer from hunger. On awakening at sunrise, the family generally assemble about the fire, and consume the remains of the preceding day's meal, if there are any; or set out in search of food, if there are not. The Puri Indian goes alone, or accompanied only by his wife, who must pick up the arrows, carry home the prey, and assist her husband in various ways.

With swift, silent steps he passes among the trees, from the trunks of which the colour of his skin renders him scarcely distinguishable,—sometimes pursuing an animal he has wounded, sometimes watching and listening for the faint sounds, or marks, which indicate their presence. Now and then he communicates with his companion, imitating, by way of signal, the cries of birds and beasts, or breaks, with main force, through an entangled mass of underwood; but more often he creeps noiselessly along, without disturbing a leaf, and sends from his concealment the small poisoned arrow, that brings certain death to his victim. No artifice of the lower animals ever deceives his practised senses. By the faint marks on the ground, by the manner in which the boughs have been parted, by the seeds or berries which have been let fall, he knows whether the armadillo, the tortoise, or the large serpent,

whether birds, or apes, have passed that way before him. His imitations of the sounds uttered by animals are sometimes perfect enough to deceive the creatures themselves; and, concealed behind a tree, he will often lure them, by this means, from their hiding-places. For the pursuit of the larger animals, several of these Indians will sometimes associate together; and the Botocudos often go in parties, under the guidance of the most experienced hunter. None of these tribes appear to have any other weapon than the bow and arrow, with which they even kill fish; and although the forests afford a variety of cocoa nuts and other fruit, they eat almost everything that comes in their way, including serpents, insects, larvæ, and the filthiest vermin; and some Bavarian travellers * found Indians who were eating a greenish kind of clay, and declared they were not comfortable till they had swallowed some ounces of it. When food enough has been obtained for the necessity of the moment, the women usually take the animals intended to be eaten, and, after having singed and scraped them, place them on a stick, for a hasty roasting; and they are then snatched and torn to pieces with hands and teeth, and devoured, skin and all.

As soon as the desire of food is satisfied, the Indian generally lies down again to sleep, or sets about the deco-

* Spix and Martius.

ration of his person; for his going entirely naked by no means frees him from the labours of the toilette. The painting of his face and body is a most troublesome operation, often occupying several hours at a time; and the painting of the children usually forms the morning occupation of the mamma of the Indian family, when she does not follow her husband to the chase. The most fashionable colours, in these forests, are burning yellowish red, and a blue black; and they are usually worn in streaks, across the forehead, or from the corners of the mouth, giving it the appearance of extending from ear to ear, which is considered becoming. Sometimes one entire half of the body is painted carefully, while the other half is left "*au naturel.*" We must not forget, nevertheless, that however we may differ from the Indian, as to the taste of his decorations, we see, in these attempts, the rude indications of that sense of beauty, which the Creator has graciously bestowed on human creatures, as a source of the purest and most innocent pleasure, and which, in its highest refinement, has given birth to all the exquisite productions of the fine arts. The most sagacious of the brute creation, to which man, in the savage state, seems scarcely superior, does not exhibit a trace of it.

The beaux and belles of the tribes we are speaking of, do not practise tattooing; but a fashion, still more disfiguring, is much in favour among them. When their

children have reached the age of about seven or eight years, they make slits in their ears and under-lips, and insert in the wound cylindrical pieces of the wood of the *Bombax ventricosa*, which is white, and lighter than cork. These pieces are exchanged for larger and larger ones as the child grows; and the effect is not considered elegant enough till the ears will reach to the shoulders, and the under-lip is distended by a piece as large as a cheese-plate. This custom prevails among many different tribes of savages.

Besides these embellishments, they bestow much pains on their hair; and adorn their necks and breasts with strings of berries, and the teeth of apes, ounces, wild cats, and other animals, which they have killed. They also suspend round their necks, with great satisfaction, little painted leaden soldiers, such as children play with, which have been sometimes presented to them by travellers; and whoever is fortunate enough to possess a knife, wears it as we do a watch or a locket.

The Indians we have been speaking of, who, as well as the native Australians, and some others, may be considered as affording examples of the lowest and rudest state in which human creatures are ever found, have no notion of the advantages of uniting their efforts for any common purpose, or of forming anything like what we call a society. Two or three families sometimes associate together for a

momentary object, such as, the hunting of a beast too large for one to attack; but they soon separate again, and each provides as well as he can for himself, without any assistance from others. They seldom remain long in one place; have no property but such as they can carry with them; and do not appear to have any sort of government or laws among themselves, although, as we often see among the lower animals when they associate, one individual will sometimes, by superior strength or skill in hunting, obtain a sort of mastery over the rest. The smallness of their numbers, and the immense extent of the country over which they are spread, gives each generally as much room at he requires, so that he seldom finds occasion to quarrel with his neighbour; and when disputes occur, for the settlement of which it is thought necessary to resort to blows, they do not appear to be as ferocious as some other tribes, who have made greater advances towards civilisation, but content themselves with as much injury as can be inflicted with fists and sticks. These affairs of honour are managed with a certain form and regularity that might not be expected. Prince Maximilian Neuwied, who spent some time among them, has described a scene of this kind. The men advanced, painted red and black, in what is considered the handsomest manner, and bringing with them large bundles of sticks, the only weapon, except the bow and arrow, with which they

appear to be acquainted. The warriors stood in a group, and the spectators formed a half circle round them. Each party uttered a few short, sharp words, that sounded like the bark of a dog; and then one, who seemed to be a leader, advanced, and, in a long tremulous sort of chant, appeared to give a list of his grievances; and, when by these and similar means, their courage was wrought up to the required pitch, they set to work and belaboured each other with the sticks till they were what we should call black and blue, although the marks were not so distinguishable on their dark and painted skins. The ladies, in the meanwhile, were by no means idle spectators of the battle, but flew at each other, literally with tooth and nail, crying and howling, and tearing out handfuls of hair, or wrenching the wooden ornaments out of the lips and ears of their antagonists. The combat lasted upwards of an hour, when all appeared thoroughly tired. The leader held out the longest, and even seemed rather inclined to renew the attack; but the Prince, after clapping him on the back, and praising his courage, persuaded him to rest contented with the amount of "gentlemanly satisfaction" he had received. The occasion of the quarrel was precisely that of the famous battle of Chevy Chase, between Earls Percy and Douglas, namely, that one party had gone hunting on the other's grounds.

Nothing is more difficult than to comprehend the

notions of savages on the subject of religion; for even cultivated people do not always find it easy to express accurately their ideas on subjects of this nature: and the languages of these rude tribes have seldom words for more than the narrow business of their daily lives, and the objects connected with them. The first vague thoughts of the existence of an invisible, mysterious world, beyond or above that which meets our eyes, are usually awakened by the extraordinary or terrifying phenomena of nature, storms, earthquakes, or volcanoes, whose cause cannot be discovered by people in a rude state. The regular changes of the seasons, in countries where they present very striking varieties, serve to awaken attention, and suggest the thought of some mighty hidden powers; but in these tropical forests, the appearances of nature are tolerably uniform. Very little change takes place in the trees; the days and nights vary but little in length; the short rainy season is soon over; no frost ever kills the plants, or hushes animals into a winter sleep; and beneath the thick covering of his umbrageous woods, the Indian has little means or opportunity for observing the glorious orbs of light, whose beauty and distance render them the first and most natural objects of worship, to the dwellers in an open country. Among these Indians a certain word is used for thunder, and for the unknown being who is supposed to occasion it; and those who inhabit the woods of Peru, have a faith in

a sort of demon, who is supposed to dwell in the darkest recesses, amongst birds of night, and hideous amphibious monsters, and to assume a friendly shape to allure solitary hunters into dreary wildernesses and jungles, and then vanish amidst mocking laughter, leaving them to perish. This goblin is said to be lame, so that by the unequal impression made by his feet, the person, whom he is trying to deceive, sometimes becomes aware whom he is following, and escapes in time. Some traces are said to have been found of a belief in a God, who was the creator of woods and rivers, sun and stars; but as this was among tribes who had had intercourse with Europeans, it is probable this idea might have been communicated by them.

Certain individuals, called *Paje*, are supposed to have a more intimate knowledge than others of the world of spirits; and as they also know more of the medicinal properties of herbs, as well as of magic spells for the cure of diseases, they are the physicians and conjurors of the tribe, and are sometimes consulted in doubtful cases, such, for instance, as, in what direction a hunting party will have most chance of success. A Portuguese writer states, that he was a hidden spectator of a meeting of the Coroados, where the magician was to answer this question, professing to derive his information from the spirits whom he consulted in dark stormy nights. The old man went alone into a dark part of the thicket, where he spoke aloud, in a

pathetic tone, frequently falling on his face. As often as the wind came rustling through the boughs, a shrill whistling sound was heard, which the Paje declared to be the answer of the spirit. These men obtain, of course, some distinction among their countrymen by their supposed magical knowledge; but it is very inconsiderable, and dearly purchased by having sickness, death, and other misfortunes ascribed to them. Whether they inherit their office, or by what means they obtain it, travellers have not been able to discover. These few superstitions are the only traces of anything like religion that have been found among these people: there are no altars, no places regarded as sacred, no traditions, and no worship. A low, monotonous chant is all they know of poetry or music, and their history is a blank. It would be a great mistake, however, to suppose that they are incapable of civilisation. In the few instances in which the experiment has been tried they have rewarded the care bestowed on them; and it is likely that the shameful cruelties practised towards their ancestors by the Portuguese, when they first got possession of Brazil, have been the cause of their remaining so long in a condition so utterly barbarous. They fled from the face of the white men, and found the wild beasts of their forests less to be dreaded than the presence of those, who, as Christians, should have been the messengers of knowledge and virtue, of "peace on earth, and good will towards men."

THE INDIANS OF THE PLAINS.

THE whole of the interior parts of South America are not occupied by forests; we find immense plains, supposed to have been once covered by the ocean, destitute of either trees or water; where, in the dry season, the grass falls to powder, the ground cracks, whirlwinds of dust arise, and great serpents lie motionless in the dry clay, till the rains fall and revive them. In some parts of these plains, however, rain will often not fall for eighteen months. The worst part, called the Salt Desert, an extent of country about as large as all Ireland, is a treeless, shapeless waste, as smooth as a floor, snow white with salt, and reflecting the rays of the fiercely blazing sun till it seems on fire. This district is, of course, not inhabited at all; but in a town situated near it, Santiago del Estero, on the banks of the river Dahe, the air, in their hottest season, the month of December, blisters the hands and faces even of people

who remain in doors; and the locks and bolts are so hot that they can scarcely be touched. About two hundred miles to the north of this Salt Desert, lies another entirely uninhabited plain, which, though within the tropics, and consequently in what is considered the hottest part of the earth, is exposed to terrible storms of hail and snow, and occasionally to a cold that has been said to equal that of the northern parts of Lapland. This is occasioned by its great height, as it forms a table land occupying the top of a range of lofty mountains, not less than thirteen thousand feet high. Besides these, there are great plains, or savannahs, covered with the richest grass; and then, again, we come to immense impenetrable woods, swarming with tigers, bears, leopards, wild boars, and huge venomous serpents. There are also some forests almost constantly covered with water, from the inundations of the mighty rivers Amazon and Orinoco, where dolphins spout and blow at a distance of twelve hundred miles from the sea.

These districts are scarcely ever visited, and, from the nature of them, cannot possibly be inhabited at all; but southward of Brazil, and westward from Buenos Ayres, is a region called the Pampas, peopled by wandering races, which, though equally wild, differ in many respects from the Indians of the primeval forests. The country they inhabit is a great plain, about nine hundred miles in breadth, and divided into three regions. For a hundred

and fifty miles it is covered, at one season, with clover; at another, with a perfect wood of enormous thistles, which shoot up to a height of ten or eleven feet; but towards the end of summer shrink and wither, their dry blackened stems rolling in the wind, until a hurricane sweeps across them, and levels them with the ground, when they soon decay, and the earth is again covered with a green mantle of rich clover. Another four or five hundred miles is a tract of grass without a weed, and beautifully scattered over with young trees; and between this and the Andes mountains, is a region of low shrubs and trees, mostly evergreens. The Indians found in this country have no fixed place of abode, but roam about wherever they find good pasture for the horses, which afford them their sole means of subsistence. They have neither corn, nor fruit, nor vegetables, but live wholly on the flesh of their mares. They go quite naked, and are almost always on horseback; for though horses did not exist in this country at the time it was discovered, the descendants of those brought over from Europe have multiplied so enormously, that vast numbers of them are found wild over the whole interior of this continent, as well as over a great part of North America.

To discover the advantage of keeping animals in herds, instead of trusting merely to the chase, has usually been regarded as a step in civilisation; but the terrible ferocity

of the manners of these Indians, who are constantly engaged in war, forbids us to place them on a higher stage than that of mere savage life. They are divided into tribes, and acknowledge a chief, who conducts their war parties. On these occasions they collect large troops of horses and mares, and start off at full gallop, uttering wild yells; and when they are hungry they stop for a short time, kill some mares, and then sweep away again in pursuit of their enemies. Their weapon is a spear eighteen feet long; their only bed the bare ground; and they are a fine, vigorous, brave race, who might, in more favourable circumstances, be probably very capable of improvement. In one respect these Indians of the Pampas, wild as they are, appear to be superior to the Puris, and other tribes inhabiting the Brazilian forest. They have some idea of religion; and believe in a future state of existence, and in good and bad spirits. Their notions, indeed, are rude enough; for they pray to both of these, and hope in a future world to enjoy the pleasures of hunting and intoxication, which form their chief delights in this. But even these fancies are preferable to the stupid want of thought, which confines man's hopes and fears wholly to the soil on which he treads; and it is much to be regretted that the occupants of South America, who are of European descent, should be, for the most part, so corrupt and degenerate, as to be very little capable of promoting the civilisation of the

Indians, whose vices, indeed, they encourage, for the sake of their own momentary and selfish interests. An English traveller,* who crossed the continent from the Pacific to the Atlantic Ocean, found living as settlers in the back parts of Brazil, where it had formerly been the custom to send convicts, the descendants of Portuguese sailors, and others, who had obtained licences to *catch* the wild Indians, and make slaves of them for ten years. The law, permitting this atrocity, was supposed to have been repealed; but, nevertheless, the Brancos, as these men are called, were in the constant habit of going into the woods to "try their fortune." The Indians, in consequence of this practice, had deserted the banks of the rivers, where they could have subsisted easily on fish, and where, as they would have been brought more into communication with Europeans, they would have had some chance of becoming less savage, and hidden themselves in the most remote and pathless forests. Even here, however, the ferocious avarice of the Portuguese pursued them. It was customary with them to go in boats up the tributary streams of the great rivers, till they reached what were considered good districts for catching Indians. Here they landed, and taking with them a native as a guide, and plenty of fire-arms, they plunged into the woods. The

* Lieutenant Lister Mawe, who published his Journal presented to the Admiralty.

Indians had such a dread of these fire-arms, that hundreds of them would sometimes run before seven or eight Brancos, though those who were caught fought desperately. When secured, they were taken down to the boats, and strongly chained. In order to supply themselves with slaves, the Brancos encourage the feuds prevailing among these Indians, and always take with them trifling goods to exchange with the petty chiefs, who keep their prisoners in *corals*, that is, uncovered enclosures; and either dispose of them in this way, or, if they cannot, kill and eat them, with as much coolness as if they were pigs or sheep. When one is wanted to *cook*, the owner takes his bow, and, going to the coral, selects his victim, and shoots him at once with a poisoned arrow. The body is then dragged out; and so blunt and torpid, it is said, are the feelings of these unfortunate creatures, that the survivors scarcely take any notice. One Indian girl, to whom the alternative was proposed of suffering this fate, or going with the Branco as his slave, preferred staying with her relations, and being eaten when her turn came. This account, it is true, was written sixteen years ago; but from the character of the Brazilian government, and the state of the country in general, there is not the smallest probability that anything has been done to improve the condition of these remote and wild districts.

The consequence of the cruelties, practised towards the

original natives of the country, has been, in many cases, to sow, in the minds of those still unsubdued, the seeds of an almost unextinguishable hatred towards its European occupants. On the Pampas of Buenos Ayres, the settlements are frequently attacked by savage tribes, and horrible massacres take place. The Indians watch their opportunity, and, approaching at night, surround them with terrific yells, set fire to the houses, and mercilessly butcher every man, woman, and child, that attempts to escape from the flames. The Guachos,* on their side, never try to take prisoners, but slaughter them with no more remorse or hesitation than if they were wild beasts.

Captain Head, who crossed this country several times, speculates on the possibility of the wild Indian tribes of South America some day uniting and making common cause against the white inhabitants, and sweeping down upon them, as the wild tribes of the North of Europe once did upon the degenerate subjects of the Roman Empire:—

"Who can venture to say when these men, mounted on the decendants of the very horses, brought across the Atlantic to aid in oppressing their forefathers, may rush from the cold regions to which they have been driven, and, with irresistible fury, proclaim to the guilty conscience of our civilised world, that the 'sins of the fathers

* The descendants of the Spaniards and Portuguese.

are visited upon their children;' that the descendants of Europeans are, in their turn, trampled under foot, and, in agony and torture, in vain are asking mercy from the naked Indians."

Bad as the conduct of the Spaniards and Portuguese has generally been, however, there are splendid exceptions in the heroic efforts made by some of the early missionaries; and it would be a great mistake to attribute wholly to their ill-treatment the fierce barbarism of many of the present Indian tribes. At the time of the discovery of America, many of them carried their terrible cannibalism to an extent never seen elsewhere; and even the nations, that might, in many respects, be regarded as civilised, sacrificed human life with a reckless barbarity, that turned the temples of their gods into huge slaughter-houses.

When nations are guilty of such atrocities as these, it is likely that instead of advancing in civilisation, they will decline more and more towards savage life.

The vast country, occupying the whole of South America southward of Buenos Ayres, is peopled only by wild tribes; and as no European colony has ever been established in it, and it has been seldom visited even by passing travellers, its inhabitants are but little known. Early voyagers gave the most marvellous accounts of a race of giants by whom it was peopled, and whom they declared to be nine or ten feet high; and though these

accounts are, in all probability, fabulous, some of the native tribes are certainly an extremely tall and large race, and there are well authenticated instances of human bones of a prodigious size having been found in the country.

The colour of these Indians is a rich dark brown, something like that of fine mahogany; and their skins are decorated with stripes and daubs of black, red, and white paint. They are not often seen naked, but both men and women wear large mantles of skins sewed together, hanging down as low as the ankles, boots of the skin of horses' legs, and wooden spurs; for all, except a few who occupy the shores of the sea on the Straits of Magellan, have horses. They live in tents made of skins, and have no other furniture than some skins to sleep on, and their arms. These consist of a long, tapering lance, pointed with iron, when it can be procured; and a rather formidable weapon, made of large lumps of lead, iron, or copper ore, or sometimes stones or lumps of earth, connected together with leathern thongs. These are whirled round several times, and then thrown at any animal which they desire to secure; and the endeavour is, generally, to make the thong hit a prominent part, the balls then swing round, in different directions, and the more the creature struggles, the more it is entangled. Sometimes a single ball is thrown from a sling with such prodigious force as to strike like a shot.

The subsistence of these people is obtained partly by hunting ostriches, deer, guanacoes, and a few other animals; but they eat the flesh of the mares, which they keep in herds, and some roots, which grow wild. It does not appear that any particular lands are assigned to each tribe, but they all wander about where they please; and the same people have been met, after the lapse of a few months, a thousand miles from where they had been seen last.

Although the Patagonians have no idea of any right in land, they seem to have notions of property in their horses and dogs, of which some possess a large number, and others only one or two; but the produce of the chase is always fairly divided between all parties. In many respects they are much superior to the wild tribes of Brazil. There are no traces of cannibalism among them; they have chiefs, to whose authority they submit, but who are expected to treat them with humanity, and to relieve the wants of the destitute; they are mostly kind to their children, and to sick and aged persons; they show no hostility to strangers; and even their women, though compelled to perform a very unfair portion of labour, are not otherwise as ill-treated as women are among many savages.

They believe in a great number of deities, both good and bad, and in a future existence in the company of the presiding spirit of their race, who is known by a name signifying, "the dweller in the land of strong drink."

THE LAND OF FIRE.

TERRA DEL FUEGO, that is, the Land of Fire, seems a very inappropriate name for a bleak storm-beaten coast, round which roll the most impetuous seas, where vegetation is blasted by perpetual fogs, which is exposed to intense cold, and covered with rugged black rocks, and lofty mountains, crowned with everlasting snow. The Spanish navigators, who gave it this name, did so, it is said, in consequence of having observed a great number of fires on the shore. No volcanoes have, however, been seen there since, though some substances have been found that were of volcanic origin; and it is probable that the fires observed were kindled by the natives. The country has not only a sombre and desolate aspect, when seen from the sea, but it is so intersected by deep and impassable inlets, abrupt precipices, quagmires, and impenetrable forests, that the natives can scarcely have any communication with each other by land.

They are scarcely ever out of their canoes, and derive their subsistence almost entirely from the sea, having no fixed habitation, but making themselves an occasional shelter at the head of a small bay, or in some secluded nook, by sticking in the ground the thick ends of boughs of trees, tying them together at the top, and either throwing skins over them, or interlacing them with small boughs and turf into a sort of wicker-work.

The appearance of these people is very strange and uncouth: their chests and shoulders are extremely large and broad, while their lower limbs are small and feeble, and so thin that the ankle is as thick as any part of the leg; and this growth is easily explained by their mode of life, for their arms and chests are brought into constant action, while their legs as they sit in their canoes are cramped and unused. They are rather short in stature, with low foreheads, broad, flat faces, high cheek bones, and coarse black hair. Their colour is naturally that of bright copper; but as they not only daub their skins with red and black paint, but smear them with clay and soot, their natural colour can seldom be seen. They have a fashion also of strewing over their heads a quantity of white ashes; so that it may be supposed, their appearance on the whole is not very inviting.

Severe as their climate is, these people go almost entirely naked, having no other clothing than a skin hanging

from one shoulder. The sole furniture of their huts is a bundle of skins or dried grass, which serves for a bed; and a few little utensils, such as rush baskets, or bags made of fish skins. In the middle of the huts a fire is always burning, and they have, of course, but a single opening, which serves at once for door and chimney. They are usually about eight feet in diameter, and five or six feet high.

The greatest exertion of ingenuity and industry made by a Fuegian is in the construction of his canoe, which, though frail and clumsy enough, costs him much time and pains, and must be stronger than might be thought possible, with his materials, to live for a moment in those stormy seas. He does not, it is true, venture far out, but pulls himself along mostly by the aid of the kelp, which grows in great abundance round the coast.

The canoe is made with three pieces of bark, sewed together with shreds of whalebone, sealskin, and twigs; the seams are then calked or stuffed with dried grass and clay, and the inside is closely lined with sticks, rounded on one side and flat on the other, like the hoops of a cask, and fastened with two cross beams, or stretchers, to strengthen it and keep it in shape. The bottom is plastered with clay, and sometimes a pole is stuck up by way of mast, with a cross yard, to which a skin is attached for a sail, the lower ends being held down by the hands. On some stones

and ashes in the midst, a fire is kept constantly burning; and the small children are laid among some dried grass at the end, where the mother is employed in paddling the canoe while the father fishes. Besides providing the food, the men build the huts, and do much of the hard work which, among savages, is often left to the women.

Such food as they require, is generally abundant: seals and tunny fish, besides great quantities of shell fish, are easily obtained; and swarms of sea-fowl, of various sizes, up to the stately albatross, inhabit these coasts, and lay their eggs among the rocks. It is said, the natives sometimes also obtain deer, not by pursuing them into the forest, for this they seem to dread, but by lying in wait at the springs where the animals come to drink. Their weapons are bows and arrows, slings and stones, and a sort of javelin pointed with flint.

No trace of any kind of religion, nothing like society, appears to exist among these poor Fuegians, who have generally been regarded as among the most wretched tribes of the human race. The term, however, does not appear to belong properly to them; for, though poor, and nearly naked, and repulsive enough in our eyes, they are lively, good humoured, and cheerful, frequently bursting into fits of laughter, and mimicking the manners and language of their European visitors with an exactness that appears droll or provoking, according to the humour of the observer.

"You black rascal, what have you done with my tin mug?" said an enraged English sailor, shaking his fist at a Fuegian, who had made free with his property; and all the answer he could get, was an exact mimickry of his threatening gesture, and an echo, "You black rascal, what have you done with my tin mug?" They can also imitate musical sounds with the most perfect correctness, following the notes of a violin up and down the octave, and even giving the semitones with scarcely a mistake.

THE AUSTRALIANS.

ALTHOUGH the island of Australia is nearly as large as all Europe, the appearance, character, and manners of its aboriginal people are almost everywhere the same. They are equally naked in the warm regions of the north, and the temperate or cold ones of the south; hunting the same animals, and destroying them with the same weapons, yet holding so little communication with each other, that different tribes often do not understand a word of each other's language.

A trifling difference is observed in their intelligence, in favour of those who inhabit the northern and eastern coasts; but in those parts where they have been visited by the Portuguese and Malays, by whom they have, probably, been ill-treated, this superior intelligence is unfortunately

accompanied by a much greater degree of ferocity. Almost all early travellers speak of the Australians as gentle and even kind in their behaviour, where their visitors have given them no provocation; so that it is but fair to suppose that where a savage disposition has appeared, it has been the result of ill-usage. They appear generally superior in understanding to the Indians of the South American forests, as the latter are mostly indolent and stupid, and show signs of weariness and annoyance when required to answer two or three questions. The Australian, on the contrary, has usually been found lively and animated; but as their country was, probably, peopled long after South America, and has many disadvantages, the natives have proceeded no further than the former towards a knowledge of the necessary arts, and are in a very poor and wretched state. Instead of the abundant production of the tropical forests, in plants, fruits, and animals, a great part of Australia scarcely yields enough to support existence; and for this reason it is, probably, little, if at all, peopled in the interior. The seas which roll upon its shores are said, however, to teem with life; and that within the tropics, to be absolutely encumbered with their productions. Everywhere on the coast numerous descriptions of wholesome fish are found, which form the principal food of the natives; and on the most desert parts, where the land does not perhaps afford a single animal capable of supporting life, nor so much as a shrub for fuel,

the ocean is exuberant in its riches. In the Torres Straits, where the excessively brilliant light of the sun, and the transparency of the water and its comparative shallowness, enables navigators to see distinctly the bottom over which they are sailing, the scene is described as most strange and beautiful. Fish of all sizes, shapes, and colours, with sea snakes of enormous magnitude and glowing lustre, are seen as easily as if they were in the air. The shark darts along with open mouth, and shoals of small fish make their escape as well as they can; the turtle, raising its unwieldy bulk to deposit its eggs; and the fantastic forms and varying hues of the sea-weeds, corals, and sponges, appear as plainly as if the water were dried up.

The productions of Australia are in general strikingly unlike those of any other country, and even where they resemble others, something about them is often so oddly the reverse of what it is elsewhere, as to seem the effect of some sport in nature. There are, for instance, trees of which the leaves do not decay with the falling year, but the bark does; and there are cherries like those of Europe, but which have the stone growing outside.

The country is scarcely anywhere flat, as far as it has yet been visited, but passes in every direction into gentle slopes and acclivities, which sometimes rise into mountains clothed in verdure to the very summit, or stand out

boldly into bare and precipitous rocks. There is also a lofty mountainous range in the south-east, called the Australian Alps, the tops of which are crowned with everlasting snows. Great tracts are covered with a beautiful open forest, or with clumps of trees scattered upon grassy plains, like the scenery of an English park. Groves, and lawns, and shrubberies are seen arranged in the most picturesque manner, as if by a skilful landscape gardener; and often a natural wall of light-coloured stone will appear at the openings, to complete the illusion by resembling an enclosure. There are large districts which the want of rain, and the fires caused by the carelessness of the natives, have rendered terribly sterile; and in these there is often great suffering from scarcity: but travellers have sometimes mistaken the preference of the natives for certain odd kinds of food, for the necessity of hunger. It has been supposed, for instance, that their searching eagerly for the gum of the mimosa tree, was a proof that their provisions were lamentably scanty; just as an Australian, brought to London, might lament the hard fate of the people, in being obliged to go all the way to Greenwich to eat such paltry food as white bait. Rats, snakes, and insects of various kinds enter into the list of Australian dainties, with the kangaroo, the emu, and the opossum; but their chief dependence appears to be upon fish.

Many parts of Australia are rich in natural flowers, of beautiful and singular forms, the exuberance of whose growth it is known acquired the name of *Botany* Bay for the point first touched at. There are many splendid trees, of hard and fine coloured woods, as fit as mahogany for making handsome furniture, as well as for the more important uses of ship and house building; but, unfortunately, there are no plants having the least resemblance to rice, Indian corn, wheat, or any of the grains of the old world. As most of them thrive well when introduced, this is of little consequence to European settlers, but it occasions a scarcity of food among the natives, who are too ignorant to think of cultivating any plant whatever.

The immense extent of country has probably prevented their improving as they might have done, had they been more crowded; as it brought them little into communication with each other, and left them free to wander about, and pick up what they could find, instead of compelling them to exert their ingenuity in obtaining it by other methods. Little acquaintance subsists even among those who are able to make canoes, which are of very different construction in different parts of the coast. In some places they have only a sort of raft, made of reeds or pieces of bark, fastened together with tough grass; and natives have often been seen sitting on the floating trunk of a tree, and paddling along with their hands. On the Gulf of

Carpentaria they use dried branches of the mangrove tree tied together, which are hardly strong enough to support one man. On the eastern coast they have canoes of eight feet long, made of broad pieces of bark, fastened together, and covered with reeds, and capable of holding three men. On the northern coast, canoes have been seen of a length of from fifteen to twenty feet, very strongly made, and quite water tight. These are rowed with paddles of wood or bark, and in the bottom is a sort of hearth of clay, on which fire is made when the people go out fishing. For a line, they use the tough and fibrous bark of certain trees, beaten between stones, till it looks like old rope, and then twisted and plaited neatly together; their hook is the claw of an eagle, or some other bird, or is made of a cockle-shell, carefully sharpened. With these, the women often fish, singing all the while, and having their children with them in a canoe, scarcely six inches above the surface of the water, and close to the surf. Harpoons and spears, ten feet long, are used by the men, who lie across the canoe, quite still, with their faces touching the water, and holding the spear in readiness to strike when they see a fish. Sometimes they fish with a spear, called a fizgig, fifteen feet long, and having four barbs; or with nets made of the skins and entrails of animals: they also dive for shell-fish, when they cannot find it on the beach, remaining an extraordinary time below the sea.

Of the few land animals which Australia affords, capable of serving as food to the natives, the kangaroo, the emu, and the opussum are the principal. These they either hunt, with assistance of wolf-like hungry dogs, or take in pits or snares very ingeniously made. Some travellers mention having occasionally seen these people lying motionless in the sun on a rock as if asleep, but holding a fish in their hands, in order to lure the birds, which are, of course, caught when they approach.

Many of the Australians have no fixed place of abode, merely lying down, wherever they happen to be, when night overtakes them, or taking refuge in the cave of a rock, in which they make a large fire, till it becomes as hot as an oven. These caverns are on the east coast of Australia, often large enough to contain forty or fifty people; and it is likely that their being found so frequently, has prevented the people from exerting themselves to build huts, since, in the woody parts of the country, some attempts of the kind have been made. These are, indeed, as rude and simple as they can well be, consisting of nothing more than large sheets of bark stripped from the trees, and bent over in the middle, like the card houses made by children. They are, of course, extremely small, sometimes scarcely holding more than one person; but, on the eastern coast, when huts are built at all, they are mostly of a better kind, consisting of many pieces of bark, fastened together

in something like the form of a baking oven, closely thatched with grass, and capable of containing six or eight people. Perhaps one cause of little pains being bestowed on the construction of these habitations, is their being so often unavoidably abandoned in search of food. Clusters of nine or ten of these dwellings have often been found empty, and one traveller* found seventy together, which were all forsaken.

In West Australia and Van Diemen's Land, the huts of the natives look like bee-hives cut through the middle; and before the open side a fire is generally burning: the best that have yet been seen are on the north coast, where they are quite round, and made of long tough twigs of the melaleuca-tree, and thatched with grass or palm leaves. A hollow tree will, however, always serve an Australian for a habitation; and he lies down to sleep contentedly among his lean hungry dogs, enjoying only the distinction of a mat. These mats are made by the women with bark or leaves; and they also manufacture baskets of reeds, or of the stalks of creeping plants, sea-weed, or the fibres of roots. Fire is one of the few things which the Australian considers indispensable; and as he makes use of precisely the same laborious method of kindling it as the Puris of South America, and most other savage tribes, that of rubbing together two pieces of dry wood, he is very careful not to

* Sturt.

allow it to go out if he can possibly help it. When a family is travelling about, one of the half-grown boys is generally intrusted with a burning firebrand to carry, and, wherever they make a halt, a fire is immediately kindled.

Although the climate of Australia is by no means such as to make clothing unnecessary, the natives are almost entirely naked, their only garment being a short cloak, made of opossum or kangaroo skin, and now and then a little apron of the same material, or sometimes merely of grass. Even these are not always seen. Some protect themselves against the air and sun, or the bites of insects, by anointing their skins all over with train oil, which is farther improved by the addition of dust or ashes; but all are willing to bestow some pains on the decoration of their persons, for which white and red ochre are much in fashion. Noses and upper lips are worn painted red, with white spots under the eyes; but, for the body, long white streaks, drawn so as to resemble the bones of a skeleton, are much in favour. Scars, artificially made with a sharpened shell, are a very customary kind of ornament among the men, for the adornment of breasts, arms, and backs; and are probably worn like the long beards and fierce moustachios of some of our dandies, to make them look warlike. The hair is never disturbed by a comb, but it is enriched by the application of fat, and decorated, for full dress occasions, with bits of wood, fish bones, birds' feathers, dogs' tails, and

human teeth, stuck on with resin. It is also sometimes considered tasteful to wear a reed run through the nose.

The life of the Australian, like that of all savages, is extremely monotonous: being varied only by alternate intervals of hunger, and immoderate excess, when the hunting or fishing has been more than usually productive; and, more rarely, by wild dances, which have seldom the air of mirth, — though the Australian might, perhaps, be inclined to make the same remark of some European parties of pleasure. As soon as the family awake in the morning, they disperse in search of food; for it is but seldom that anything is left from one day to another. The men go fishing or hunting; the wife generally angles, or dives for muscles, or digs for fern roots; while the children roll about, sometimes into the fire or water, though they are often carried on the mothers' shoulders, or wrapped in a piece of soft bark if they are still infants. Some painful instances are related of the carelessness and indifference of Australian mothers. A lady (Mrs. Meredith) who visited Australia lately, mentions one who, when questioned as to what had become of her infant, replied, after glancing carelessly round, that "she did not know, she believed the *dog had eaten it!*" Nevertheless, when we consider the condition of these people, how little it is raised above that of the brutes, we shall, perhaps, be more surprised at the instances of domestic attachment and

affection frequently to be met with among them. Every one eats immediately part of what he finds, and usually brings the rest to a place of meeting, where the men seize on what they like best, and throw the remainder to the women and children. The food is eaten either raw, or just singed over the fire. When the immediate want is satisfied, they do not appear to employ themselves with providing for any future occasion, but loiter idly about, or sometimes dance, which they seem able to do at all times, even after long and wearisome marches. They will, on some occasions, continue these dances through the whole night, to the tuneful accompaniment of two sticks, rattled together; and the long droning songs seeming to contain some allusion to the incidents of their lives, which form their whole stock of literature. They have much feeling for music. A French traveller mentions some natives of Van Diemen's Land who appeared quite delighted with the Marseilleise Hymn, though they crammed their fingers in their ears when some one played the violin; and a native, who was taken to an amateur theatre in one of the European settlements, burst into tears when the actors sung, " God save the king."

Some attempts at drawing have been found; which are very interesting, as being the earliest indications of a taste for this art. They consist of figures of animals, canoes, weapons, and even of men, cut on the surface of the rock,

or drawn with charcoal, rude enough, of course, but sufficiently like to be recognised. Drawings of this kind have been found in South America; but as they appear to have been the work of a different race, they do not belong to our present subject. Similar ones are also seen in South Africa, and among the pastoral people of Asia; and it is most likely that the ancient Egyptians began with such drawings as these, and went on, altering and shortening them, when every one knew what was meant, till they came to hieroglyphics; and there is little doubt that our letters of the alphabet were originally formed in the same way.

It is not certainly known whether the native Australians execute these figures merely by way of amusing themselves, or whether they are intended to communicate information, as in the case of the picture writing before alluded to; as the amusements of savages are mostly of a different kind, it is probable they have been intended to convey intelligence to companions who might be passing that way.

One of the first steps towards civilization is the formation of a society, in which people may assist each other, and divide among them the duties to be done in the manner most advantageous for all. This step can scarcely be said to have been yet taken by the Australian; for though a number of families are occasionally associated together into a tribe, their association appears to have no other object

than that of attack or defence in war. One traveller mentions a chief, near Port Philip, who was brought to the the English boat, raised on the shoulders of two men, and surrounded by others, shouting and clapping their hands. He was dressed, too, with unusual splendour; he wore on his head a garland or diadem made of swan's feathers, round his neck a collar of rushes, and he had a larger mantle than any one else, and a longer reed through his his nose. Whether he obtained his dignity by election or birth could not be ascertained. On the northern coast something like a nobility was found, who did nothing for their own subsistence, but lived on the provisions and fish caught by the rest.

A certain district is believed to be assigned to each family in a tribe, in which they may hunt or dig for roots, and in which they have especially the right to the worms found on the grass trees, which are regarded as peculiar dainties. These districts are so extensive, that quarrels do not often take place, and wars on a large scale, between many tribes at a time, have never been heard of. The bringing together a great number of men, and uniting their efforts for one purpose, would be an undertaking requiring more thought, arrangement, and discipline than the Australians are capable of.

That anything that may be called religion exists among these poor creatures appears exceedingly doubtful, and is

by some travellers positively denied. Like the wild Indians of South America they have neither altars, nor sacrifices, nor worship of any kind. They adore neither sun nor moon, neither fish nor bird, and have no conception of any great invisible Being to whom reverence is due. Some traditions exist of an evil spirit, whose abode is in a dark cavern, and whose voice is heard in the rushing of the wind through the trees; of a monster, like a crocodile, who inhabits rivers and makes children his prey; and of a giant, in human form, dwelling in the rocks, and feeding on black men. Beyond these, and some similar superstitions, their notions of spiritual existence do not extend.

The most painful circumstances mentioned concerning the Australians is their treatment of women. Among all savages the women are more or less oppressed, and subjected to an unfair proportion of labour and hardship; for it is only when men acquire notions of honour and religion that they learn to treat with gentleness and respect those who are weaker than themselves. But with the native tribes of Australia even marriage is not preceded by any of those kind attentions which it seems to us so natural for a man to pay to a woman whom he wishes to select for his partner and companion. It seems, indeed, as if the motive of the Australian were not love, but hatred and revenge, for the woman is generally selected from a hostile tribe,

and the man conceals himself and watches for an opportunity when she is alone and unprotected. He then rushes out upon her, strikes her on the head and shoulders with a club till she is stupified, and then drags her away, bleeding and senseless, through the woods. This practice, so frequent that even children make a play-game of it, ought alone, perhaps to place the Australian on the very lowest step of human existence. It seems, indeed, to degrade them below the very beasts of the forest, for even among them we trace something like family affection.

Another of their practices is worth mentioning, because it has prevailed so generally, not only among savage tribes, but even among those who have made great advances in knowledge and refinement, that we may be sure, however absurd it may appear in its form, there is some true notion connected with it—it is that of subjecting young men to some sort of painful trial before they are admitted to the privileges and distinctions of manly age. This custom prevailed during the ages of chivalry over all Europe; and however ludicrous the tricks of the Australian savage may appear in comparison with the imposing ceremonies of the knightly ordeal, the meaning of both is essentially the same.

The loss of the front tooth is considered as the permanent mark of the transition from boyhood to manhood; and the only trace of superior distinction belonging to any tribe

over another, consists in the right enjoyed by one, on the Eastern coast, to a tribute of the teeth so knocked out.

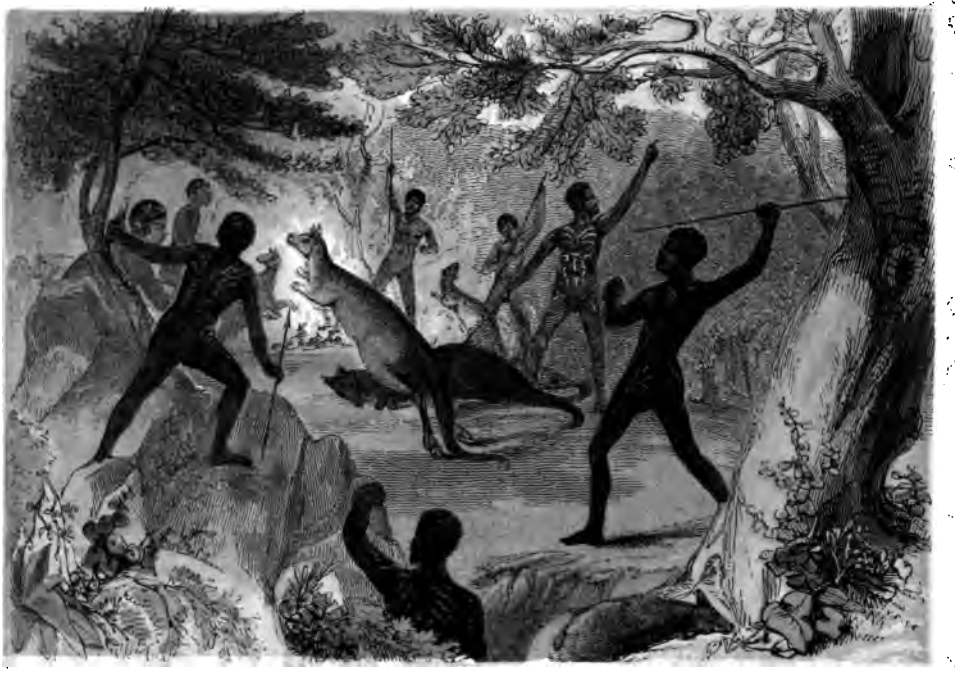
When the time arrives for the performance of this ceremony, the boys, to be operated upon, assemble—voluntarily to all appearance, as those who failed to present themselves would have to bear the reproach of cowardice: an oval space, of about twenty-seven feet long and eighteen broad, having been some days before cleared of grass and roots as an arena for its performance. At one end the candidates and their friends place themselves, and at the other the men who are to be the operators. At a given signal the latter rush forward, and, seizing the boys, drag them into the centre, and make them sit down cross-legged, with their heads down, and their hands clenched, as if they were captives. The operators then sticking their clubs or waddies into their girdles behind, so as to represent a dog's tail, go down on all fours, and run round and round the arena, throwing the dust and sand on the boys as they pass. When this part of the exhibition has continued long enough, they make their exit, and presently enter again, bearing bundles of grass under their arms, and hopping in the fashion of kangaroos, whose tails the grass represents; while their lean brown bodies and long thin arms and legs give them precisely the appearance of ourang-outangs. These ceremonies are typical of the employment of the *men;* the dog and the kangaroo are to be given to them as

their property, the one to assist in hunting, the other to be hunted: other pantomimic representations then take place, of war, of the chace, and of the capture of wives; and the tooth is finally struck out with one of their weapons called a throwing-stick, the performers in the meanwhile roaring in the ears of the boys the most loud and terrifying yells they can utter.

Throughout Australia the throwing-stick and spear serve as substitutes for the bows and arrows in use among most rude nations. The spear is mostly made of the melaleuca, a kind of tea tree; a twig, about as thick as a little finger, being scraped sharp at the point, and baked till it becomes nearly as hard as iron: but the spear heads are often of sharp stone, and with the additional velocity given to them by the throwing-stick, they become very formidable, and will pass right through the body of a man at the distance of considerably more than a hundred yards. Besides these, they have a weapon called a *boomerang*, imitations of which are now sold as playthings in English toy-shops. The real one is a very hard, heavy piece of curved wood, which is thrown upwards in a slanting direction, and goes whizzing and whirling through the air, and hits with great force as it returns. All these weapons are often carved with a great deal of taste; for both savage and civilised men acquire a sort of affection for the inanimate objects, which afford them the means of subsistence.

The sailor loves his ship, and the musician his fiddle, and the Australian the hunting and fishing implements, without which he must starve.

A native is seldom seen to more advantage than when engaged in the chace; and as he is following a necessary vocation, our admiration of his skill is not disturbed, as in the case of an English sportsman, by the consideration that he might find some better employment for his faculties than that of contending with a bird or a small quadruped for the prize of superior cunning. The wild hunter does not kill animals for the fun of the thing; he only labours truly to get his living in his appointed vocation. The father of the family stalks forth, followed at a humble distance by his wife, or wives, with their children on their shoulders, holding fast by their hair, and carrying a bag containing a quantity of valuable property,—a flat stone to pound roots, kangaroo sinews to sew with, cakes of gum to make or mend weapons, stones for hatchets, needles made of bones, opossum hair to be spun into belts, muscle shells to cut it, and red and yellow ochre and pipe-clay for the improvement of the complexion. The eye of the Australian, generally dull and heavy, brightens up, and his motions become quick and animated, as he glances round on every side for marks by which he may detect the presence of his game. Suddenly he stops and listens—his whole soul seeming absorbed in the senses of sight and



KANGAROO HUNT IN NEW SOUTH WALES.

hearing—the woman throws herself on the ground, the little ones cower by the side of her, and the whole group remains as motionless as the trees around them. About a hundred yards in advance is seen a kangaroo, quietly feeding on the grass, its little one peeping from the pouch, and occasionally tasting its mother's food. Presently the spear whistles through the poor animal, and then the wood rings with shouts, as it flies along, endeavouring to escape, but closely followed by its enemies. At length it stops, places its back against a tree, and rears up, preparing to seize its antagonist, and tear him with its powerful claws. In this position it is easy for another spear to pierce its breast, and the battle is over.

Sometimes a public hunt, or *battue*, is made by a number of natives together, who surround a party of kangaroos, and, firing the bushes, attack them as they rush out. On these occasions a sanguinary contest takes place, for the animals are well able to defend themselves. Sometimes a hunter will lie in wait at a solitary water, in some dry and desert plain, and make prize of every creature as it approaches to drink; sometimes he will pursue the track of a kangaroo for days together before it is taken. But the grandest banquet of all is, when a whale is cast upon the shore; and the natives come thronging from all parts to enjoy the luxury of eating their way into the monstrous carcase. The description, however, of what

goes on at these grand dinner parties, as well as that of many processes of the Australian "*cuisine*," is almost too much for a European stomach; though, perhaps, not really worse than the operations of butchers, fishmongers, and poulterers among ourselves.

One circumstance that seems to promise well for the capability of improvement among these poor people is, the great susceptibility they show to poetry and music. Their only instrument, it is true, is a piece of flat board, beaten by a short round stick; but they are in the habit of singing on all occasions of joy, or grief, anger, and even hunger. One has been heard running thus:—

"Eat great deal—eat, eat, eat!
Eat again; plenty to eat!
Eat more yet!—eat, eat, eat!" &c.

But though many of these songs, from the rudeness and simplicity of the ideas expressed in them, are droll enough to our notions, they are, in most cases, the genuine effusions of feeling and passion, and therefore contain the elements, however strangely disguised, of true poetry. Captain Grey, who has written a very interesting account of these people, mentions a sort of lyric dialogue taking place between an Australian and his wives. The old gentleman, having received some real or imaginary affront, returns to his hut in a towering passion, and, calling

for his arrows, begins to sharpen them preparatory to bringing his enemy to account; and, while thus engaged, bursts forth into song:—

"I'll spear his liver! I'll spear his lights!
I'll spear his heart! I'll spear his thigh!" &c.

And his wives, entering into his feelings, chime in,—

"The wooden-headed, bandy-legged, thin-thighed fellows!" &c.

Soothed by their sympathy, the old gentleman looks round pleased, though ferocious, and resumes,—

"I'll spear their liver! I'll spear their bowels!
I'll spear their hearts! I'll spear their loins!"

quivering his spear the while, and imitating sundry warlike feats of his youth.

These songs sometimes take the form of real literary performances, being composed and sung for amusement. Any one who goes to visit a distant tribe, almost always brings back a new song; and, if it happens to take, it is caught up and sung in all quarters — just as one, that happens to become popular, is in the streets of London.

THE

MEN OF THE FROZEN NORTH.

THE countries lying round the North Pole, covered with almost everlasting snow and ice, and subject to a cold so terrible, that our severest winters will not afford us the faintest idea of it, could not of course be inhabited at all by naked and unsheltered savages, such as those who people the woods and plains of warm countries. The force of the piercing winds, that come sweeping from the pole, blow over these icy deserts with scarcely any interruption. There are no trees—not so much as a bush or a twig affording materials for the shelter so much needed. Even here, however, nature yields resources for those who know how to avail themselves of them. The skins of seals, bears, wolves, and foxes—thick, soft mosses and lichens—the feathers of the eider duck and goose,—furnish materials for clothing well adapted to the climate; and, for

a dwelling, there is the snow itself in unlimited abundance, and trunks of trees washed by the sea from wooded shores, as well as stones and earth. With such means as these, tribes of Esquimaux have been found living in apparent comfort between seventy and eighty degrees of north latitude; where the cold was so tremendous, that a person running out for a moment, with his hands uncovered, had them instantly frozen to such a degree, that they turned to ice a basin of water into which they were plunged; and where, in the month of June, the ice was found upwards of seven feet thick, and the warmest season exceeds in severity our coldest January.

Like almost every part of creation it has, however, beauties and charms of its own. The pure dazzling white of the snow is varied by the transparent blue and green of the masses of ice; and the sky, in fine weather, exhibits the most gorgeous and glowing colours, from deep purple to a brilliant scarlet, never seen elsewhere: as the position of the noonday sun is as low in the sky as ours at evening, it presents all the rich tints of our finest sunsets, in addition to the aerial hues and reflections of the snow-covered mountains, gleaming in all the colours of the rainbow. The darkness even of the midnight skies is illumined by the magnificent and ever-varying spectacle of the Aurora Borealis.

From Cape Farewell, in Greenland, to Behring Straits,

between Asia and the north-western extremity of America, the climate is the same, and the inhabitants are of the Esquimaux race—speaking everywhere the same language, and having the most exact resemblance in appearance, habits, and manners; even those who dwell on the Asiatic shores of the Arctic Ocean are strikingly similar.

They are short and thick in their growth, and of a bronze-copper colour, sometimes showing a tinge of red in the cheeks; their faces are plump and smooth, and their features small and snubbed, as if noses, eyes, and ears had shrunk in from the cold; and a peculiarity of their race is, that the eyes are not set straight, but slanting upwards from the nose. They have usually a placid, good-humoured expression, and the young women have sometimes been thought pretty by judges not very fastidious.

As the Esquimaux derive their principal subsistence from the sea, they do not permanently occupy any spot, but travel about, and fix themselves for a time wherever they may find it expedient. The snow and ice, which form their building materials, are always at hand, and a few hours is sufficient for the construction of a little village. The huts are built in the form of a dome, of separate blocks, cut with perfect regularity and no small art, so that they may fit together into the shape of a substantial arch, so exactly built as to require no other support than what this principle affords. The circular space

which it covers is of about ten feet diameter, and the entrance is by a long crooked passage.

Sometimes, when these habitations are intended to shelter two families, they are made of an oval shape, about fifteen feet long and ten broad. Opposite to the entrance, and filling about half the space, is a bank of snow, beaten hard, and covered with skins, which serves as the bed for the whole family. At the foot of this embankment sits the lady of the mansion, opposite to the lamp, which serves at the same time for lighting it, and for cooking the meals. A high bank of snow is built up before the outer entrance, the position of which is occasionally altered, according to the wind and weather; and, sideways from the principal passage, is another smaller one, leading to a recess for the dogs. In the roof is a round hole, into which is inserted a piece of transparent ice to admit light; and near the main dwelling other smaller huts are generally built, during the winter, to contain stores of food, clothing, and weapons. On parts of the coast, where the sea throws on shore drift wood, the huts are sometimes made of a square shape, with a post at each corner rising six feet above the ground, and on which the roof rests; others have been seen built with the bones of the whale and walrus, and covered with skins. These have a much dirtier and more unpleasant aspect than those made only of snow, which, when well lit, are translucent, and look very pretty from the outside.

The summer dwellings of the Esquimaux are tents made of skins stretched over poles, and having a flooring of boards. They are pitched close to the sea; and, near them, the canoes, turned bottom uppermost, serve to shelter the dogs. Captain Beechey found a little community of twenty-five persons occupying five of these tents, and for each tent there was one canoe, or baidar. Before each lay heaps of skins, filled with train oil and fat; and near them were erected scaffoldings of drift wood, on which hung nets of dried salmon, and pieces of whale entrails, used for garments.

On the coasts of Baffin's Bay the huts are built of large stones, laid one on another, with turf between, and across which is a roof, covered with moss, and earth, and small wood, and supported by beams. As long as the frost continues the roof remains on, but in summer, when it rains, it falls in. These huts have neither door nor chimney, but the place of both is supplied by a long passage of stones and clay, so low at both ends, that it must be passed by crawling on hands and knees. This keeps out the cold, and allows the smoke and some of the foul air to escape. The inside of the walls is hung round with skins, mostly those previously half worn out for tents; and from the middle to one side, is a sort of raised platform of boards covered with skins, and separated into several compartments, or stalls, by skins hanging down from the top.

Each of these is occupied by a separate family; and though the whole edifice is not more than about thirty or five-and-thirty feet long, eight or ten families live in each. They sleep on skins, and sit on them for days together; the woman sewing or cooking over the lamp placed opposite the foot of her bed, the man making or mending his fishing implements. Along the wall opposite to the beds runs a wooden bench, on which strangers may sit or sleep.

The lamp, which is at the same time the fire-place, is a hollowed out stone, filled with train oil, with a wick made of fine moss. It is placed on a low three-legged stool, on a heap of flat stones, and above it a large stone kettle is suspended by strings from the roof. The smell of these lamps, which are seldom suffered to go out day or night, the breath of so many persons, the effluvia from the often half decayed fish or meat that is boiling, and from the skins which are being soaked to prepare them for use,—make these habitations almost insupportable to any but a native of these regions, who, if he have food and warmth, requires no other comfort, They generally pass seven or eight months, from October to May, in these unsavoury dwellings; and then, apparently with great joy, leave them, and, taking to their boats, land and pitch their summer tents wherever it is convenient.

These boats, or canoes, consist of a light framework of the bones of the whale and walrus, with skins stretched

over them. The skins are not only extended round the bottom and sides, but also over the top, so as to form a complete deck. In this there is one or more openings fitted with a flat hoop, to which a sort of bag of skin is sewed, that can be drawn round the body. The canoes are of two kinds; the smaller called by a name signifying man's boat, and the other, which is used for transporting their possessions, woman's boat. These are capable of containing a great deal. Two, apparently small ones, from which a party of Esquimaux were seen to land, contained fourteen persons, eight tent poles, forty reindeer skins, many hundred weight of dried fish, two live foxes, ten great dogs, eight broad planks, besides masts, sails, rudders, bundles of lances, harpoons, bows and arrows, clothing, and other articles.

The dress of these people, consisting wholly of the skins of animals, is enormously bulky, and, though not without ornament, in general extremely greasy and filthy. Men and women wear nearly the same dress, and head, hands, feet, and even faces, have each their separate coverings. The upper garments, encircling the body, reach from the chin to the knee; two are worn, one with the hair inward, and the other the reverse. They have trowsers of deer or seal skin, and not unfrequently two pairs of boots, spacious enough for the ladies to deposit a baby in. Sometimes, instead of these, they wear stockings

of seal skin, and shoes lined with soft moss. They have caps made of firs and the skins of birds, which, in summer, are often fitted with a shade of quills, or wood, to protect the eyes from the dazzling effect of the constant daylight on the snow; for which purpose they also make very neat snow spectacles, of wood or ivory, with two holes for the eyes.

Even in these icy regions the notions of dress are, however, not confined merely to what is useful. The garments are ornamented with fringes of sinews, or small bones, hands and faces are painted and tattooed, and the decoration, so much in vogue among savages, of a bone or shell thrust through the cartilage of the nose, is not forgotten.

Some "*elegans*" insert a round piece of ivory through holes made on each side of the under lip, which, with a large glass bead in the middle, is considered to have a very rich effect; and those who cannot afford ornaments of this value, imitate them with pieces of bone, or even of stone.

The Polar nations, like almost all rude people, have colossal appetites, and can take with ease and pleasure an almost incredible quantity of food. Four or five pounds of meat is usually consumed at one meal by a single Esquimaux; and, on grand occasions, they have been seen to take as much as fourteen pounds of raw salmon each. Yet they seldom suffer from scarcity, as they

subsist chiefly on marine animals, which are found in great abundance; reindeer, bears, wolves, and foxes, and even musk oxen, are by no means scarce; and in the summer they are able to take many kinds of birds and fish. Their principal food, however, is train oil, and the flesh of seals and walrusses merely dried in the air, or boiled in sea water. Their principal meal is taken in the evening when they return from fishing, and those who have abundance are usually willing to share it with the less fortunate. After a plentiful banquet on these dainties they often become so exhilirated as to conclude with a dance—a surprising feat, when we consider the amount of provisions consumed. Hard times, however, occur generally between March and May, when seals are scarce, and the provisions of the winter mostly consumed; and then the deficiencies of the more favourite viands have to be supplied by sea-weed, and even old tent skins, on which, it appears, it is possible for them to subsist. Some Esquimaux bury quantities of seals' flesh, and other food, in the sand; and Captain Beechey was led to one of these dépôts, where an Esquimaux showed him with great complacency large pieces of seals' flesh and fat, wrapped in the skin, floating in disgusting-looking train oil; and, after stirring it round with his hand, politely invited the captain to partake, manifesting surprise and some contempt at the bad taste *which led* him to decline the offer.

So kindly have the desires of this simple race been adapted by Providence to the means of gratification, that the food, which we can hardly hear of without disgust, affords them enjoyment beyond the mere satisfaction of their hunger, and has been preferred to the roast beef and pudding offered as a treat by English sailors. On the most wild and desolate spots, tribes have been met with living in comfort, and even affluence, if the term may be applied to the greatest abundance of everything considered desirable. Within only ten degrees of the pole, a tribe was found living contentedly, though unconscious that they were not the sole inhabitants of the earth, regarding the English ship as a supernatural creature, and solemnly addressing it with—"Who are you? Whence come you? Is it from the sun or the moon?"

These people were without even the convenience of canoes, and were in the habit of going out to sea on pieces of floating ice to attack the Polar bear. As a compensation they enjoyed the use of an abundance of iron, which, they said, they broke off a mountain, made entirely of that metal.

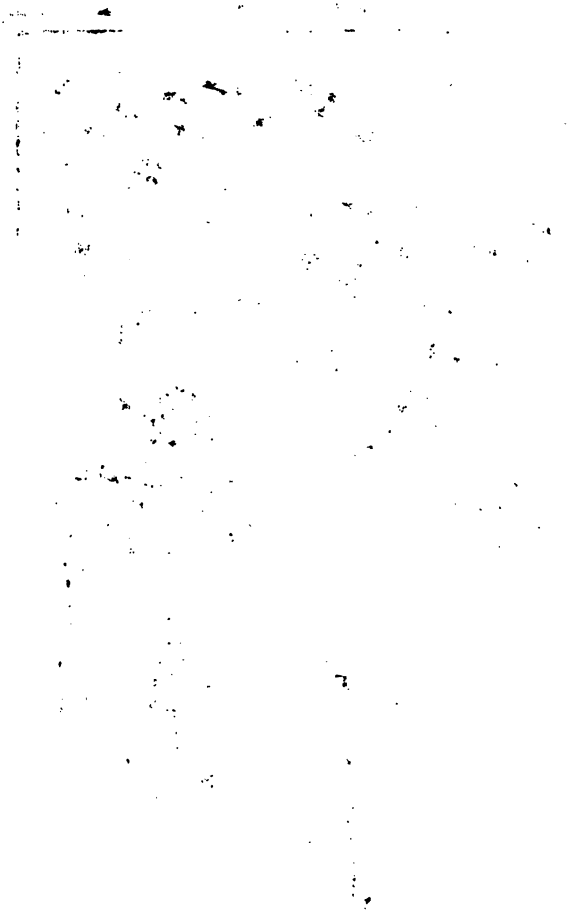
One great cause both of the comfort of the Esquimaux, and their freedom from the torment of malignant and ferocious passions, is undoubtedly the necessity they are under of constant exertion, and their industry and intelligence.

The industry required to build one of the above

described dwellings is far above that employed by the Brazilian forester for his screen of palm leaves, or the Australian for his hut of bark; but many operations besides this — the preparation of the skins, which serve for a bed, and of the lamp, which affords light and warmth—are absolutely necessary to preserve the Esquimaux from perishing. For his hunting and fishing also, he has need of more skilfully constructed implements than the bow and arrow, or the spear. In winter, when land and sea are hard frozen and covered with deep snow, he has often to traverse vast distances in search of food; and to enable him to do this, as he cannot use his canoe, he must construct a sledge, often with no other tools than what he makes out of stones, or even pieces of sharpened ice, and train a number of dogs to draw it. These dogs are a wild wolf-like race, mostly white, but sometimes grey or black; they do not bark but howl, and subsist on fish, which, in summer, when they are left at liberty, they are very skilful in catching. Towards October they are caught and tied up, being purposely then left with very scanty food, as it is thought they cannot run when they are fat; and not at all approving of this course of treatment, they signify their displeasure by loud and incessant howling. They show very little obedience to their masters; and if, when on a journey, he once loses his hold, he has little chance of getting them to stop. When the



ESQUIMAUX TRAVELLERS HARNESSING A SLEDGE.



sledge is turned over, as it often is, he has therefore no choice but to allow them to drag him along the ground for miles, or lose his sledge. These dogs are, at all times, unmanageable steeds, quarrelsome and unruly, and not unfrequently engaging in a general fight.

The Esquimaux are always found living together in little societies, of several families; but there does not seem to be any kind of government among them, except that of the father of each, who keeps order as well as he can; and it is pleasing to find that in these inhospitable regions, where men have to contend with so many hardships and difficulties, they do not increase them by quarrelling among themselves. When several families live in one hut, there seems to be a sort of understanding, that he, among the old men, who is the best hunter and fisher, and knows most about the weather, shall have the best place, and see that the rest go in and out at the proper times. No one seems to desire any authority over the other; there are neither rich nor poor among them; every one makes for himself whatever he requires, and there is seldom any unwillingness to afford each other assistance when it appears necessary. Every party settles where it thinks proper; and if, in the summer expeditions, it approaches a shore where another has taken up its abode, it is usual not to land till invited to do so by the first occupants. Whoever finds anything on the sea shore is the

owner, but he must lay a stone upon it to signify that he has taken possession. A seal belongs to whoever first wounds it, and if it is struck by two spears at once, it is divided between the two persons who have thrown them. When small articles are in question, the Esquimaux sometimes lick them all over in token of appropriation.

A whale, as it must be taken by the association of many fishers, becomes public property, and is generally surrounded by a crowd, eagerly cutting and slashing at the enormous carcase, and not unfrequently wounding each other in the operation; but every one is too busy and too good humoured to take it amiss. The Esquimaux are said to be scrupulously honest with respect to each other's property, though they have little hesitation in making free with articles belonging to their white visiters; but it is likely that they consider the possessions of the Europeans so boundless as to suppose they will little regard the loss. Scarcely any traces of war have been found among them, much less of cruelty, or any kind of cannibalism; and they almost always receive strangers with kindness and hospitality. During the three years that Captain Ross and his crew spent in continual communication with them, only one quarrel occurred, and even that originated in an amiable feeling. One of their children, to whom they appear affectionately attached, had been accidentally killed by the fall of a stone, and in their grief for its loss they

the error of supposing that their apparently English friends must, if not have occasioned, foreseen, the accident. The mistake, however rectified, and a good understanding re-

rude a people should be immoderately delight they regard as sensual enjoyments, and that should not be in all points accordant with consider good morals, does not appear surprising. always "keep their hands from picking and nor, it is to be feared, always "their tongues speaking;" but, at least, they seem to "bear no hatred in their hearts," and to "labour truly to living in that state of life unto which it has pleased to call them," better than many civilised well acquainted with the catechism.

five tribes of the great peninsula of Kamschatka, their country is very little farther north than and Scotland, bear a great resemblance to the in manner of life and appearance, though they means so peaceful and well disposed. Their considering the latitude, subject to extreme mostly occupied with lofty mountains, whose summits reach to the heavens, and are crested with snow, which glitter in the sunbeams, while the in huge masses below them. It is covered

with volcanoes, and with vast heaps of granite blocks of various sizes, thickly piled together, whose pointed jagged forms show the violence of the convulsion in which they have been rent from their native rocks. Frequent shocks of earthquakes are felt, and one of the highest mountains is continually pouring forth streams of lava on the surrounding country. These mountains, with their snowy glaciers, and volcanoes emitting columns of fire and smoke, form the most picturesque contrast with the beautiful green of the valleys; and an effect indescribably splendid is produced when the sun shines on the crystal rocks of the western coast, and their refulgent surface reflects his rays in every brilliant tint, like the diamond mountains of some fairy land, whilst the rocks of quartz shine like masses of solid gold.

The interior of the country is picturesque beyond description, and the abundance of wild animals, birds, and fish, besides many kinds of fine berries, make the life of the hunter so easy and profitable, that the ground is but little cultivated even by the Russians, who, since its conquest, have been settled in the southern parts. The native tribes are, however, decreasing rapidly; not only the long and sanguinary wars with Russia, but the operation of destructive diseases the injurious effects of ardent spirits, and the practice formerly prevalent among them of destroying many of their infants, have caused so rapid a decrease in

this race, that it seems likely to disappear altogether. The scanty remnant of the native population is found chiefly on the banks of rivers, and on the sea coast, occupying, in summer, dwellings called balagans, built on platforms ten or twelve feet high, with long poles stuck round in a circle, and tied together at the top. The outside is then covered with the bark of the pine and birch, and sometimes with coarse grass. The platform is ascended by notches cut in the trunk of a tree, so as to make a sort of rude ladder; and beneath it are poles laid along posts, for the purpose of drying fish for the winter stock. As much as a thousand salmon are sometimes laid up in store by a single family. This mode of building the huts has probably been adopted to escape from the inundations, which, in a country abounding in snow-covered mountains and deep narrow valleys, must be violent and sudden. In winter half-a-dozen familes huddle themselves together in a single dwelling, made by digging to a depth of five or six feet into the ground, and covered by a conical roof sloping down to the surface. These mansions are entered by walking up the roof and getting down the chimney, through the thick smoke, which blackens the interior so that it often looks as if it were japanned. In winter heavy snows come drifting from the mountains, and often bury the houses so completely, that travellers may drive their sledges over their frozen tops without seeing them, and the inhabitants

have much difficulty in forcing their way out. The summer occupation of the Kamschatdales is fishing, and in winter they hunt the reindeer and the bear on sledges drawn by long teams of dogs, whose skins, as well as those of the reindeer and seal, form their clothing. They travel very rapidly in these sledges, and generally manage to escape the dangers of snow storms, as they become excellent judges of the weather, and foresee a tempest in time to find some shelter. It sometimes happens nevertheless that they are overtaken in a deep ravine, where such an immense quantity of snow becomes heaped upon them, that hunters, sledges, and dogs are buried together.

Another peril to which they are exposed is, that when venturing in pursuit of the seal in their sledges on masses of ice, it occasionally happens that it breaks loose from the shore, and they are driven out to sea. The chase of the large and powerful bears that are so numerous all over the peninsula, is also of course not unattended with danger: but these are only occasional incidents, and there is perhaps no country in the world where the life of the hunter and fisher is more agreeable and profitable. Not only do the fish swarm in the rivers to such an extent that travellers seem to be fairly pushing them out of the water as they cross, but immense herds of reindeer cover the bleak and desolate looking moors; the argalis, or mountain sheep, afford a meat superior to the finest and most delicate

mutton of Europe; and geese, ducks, pheasants, partridges, teal, ptarmigans, and, many other birds, are so plentiful, that nothing but the grossest improvidence can ever occasion scarcity.

The Kamschatdale hunter, if successful, is also not only able to provide himself with food and clothing, but with the valuable furs of the sable, sea-otter, beaver, and fire-fox, which he exchanges with the Russians for tea, and unfortunately also for brandy, so that his situation may be regarded as one of abounding comfort and luxury, compared with that of the inhabitants of Northern Siberia, who are his nearest neighbours, and separated from him by only a few degrees.

Of the inhabitants of the Asiatic shores of the Arctic Ocean, the only tribes now remaining independent are those occupying the country immediately north of Kamschatka. All the others are tributary to the Russian empire, and are counted among its subjects; but they pay a heavy penalty for the advantages they obtain by communication with a more civilised nation in the terrible famines to which they are subject, and which are often the consequence of the injudicious regulations of the government. An order was once, for instance, sent from St. Petersburg, that all the dogs throughout the north of Siberia should be destroyed, as it was supposed that from the quantity of food they consumed they occasioned scarcity among the

inhabitants, whilst in reality it was only by the assistance of their dogs, who drew the sledges in which they hunted, that the inhabitants were able to get food at all. Epidemic diseases also sometimes break out among the dogs, which kill great numbers, and when occurring in the spring, when the winter provisions have been mostly exhausted, occasion severe sufferings among the people. Crowds of these poor creatures then find their way to the Russian settlements, and come flocking in, in search of food, staggering along, pale and ghost-like, and devouring greedily every species of refuse that falls in their way, even bones, skins, and pieces of leather. A Russian traveller* who explored this country witnessed three of these terrible famines in three successive springs. It sometimes happens fortunately that when the suffering is at its worst, relief suddenly arrives in the appearance of countless swarms of birds, swans, geese, ducks, and many others; and old and young men and women rush out joyfully to kill all they can.

The chief article of food to all the dwellers on the icy plains of the north of Siberia is herrings, which, in the month of September come up the rivers in such countless swarms, that as many as three thousand are sometimes taken at a draught, and forty thousand in two or three days.

The Tchuktchi independent tribes, who occupy the

* Admiral Von Wrangell.

eastern part towards Behring's Straits, live, like the Esquimaux, principally on the flesh of the seal, whale, and walrus, and on train oil; and their huts are made with poles or bones covered with skins, with a hole at the top to let out the smoke. They also use the lamp with train oil and a moss wick, as well as fires made with bones steeped in train oil, over which they boil their food; but it is constantly eaten cold. For drink they use the broth of their meat or fish mixed with snow, and frequently conclude their meals with a handful of fresh snow, which they eat with much apparent relish, notwithstanding the terrible cold of their climate. Besides fishing, and hunting the seal and walrus, and the ferocious white Polar bear, whom they attack in his den among the hummocks or ice hills of the Arctic Sea, they occupy themselves a good deal with a traffic, which they carry on in their frail canoes, with the people of the Aleutian Islands, and the opposite shores of America.

With these they make in their sledges journeys of five hundred miles along the icy desert, bringing with them their women and children, and all their household goods, to a fair held once a year by the Russians, on an island at the mouth of the river Anini. The Russians bring upwards of a hundred pack-horses laden with kettles, hatchets, knives, beads, tobacco, and secretly—for the article is forbidden by their government—a small quantity of the *mad-making water*, as the Tchuktchi call it—that is, brandy.

Their wares are the furs of the black and silver-grey fox, the stone fox, the sable, otter, &c., besides bear-skins, walrus-teeth, and sledge runners made of the bones of whales. The Tchuktchi encamp on the islands and banks of the river; and when the Russians have ranged themselves in front of their fort, the Tchuktchi come in their sledges, and draw up in a line opposite to them. On the appointed day the signal is then given for commencing operations, by hoisting a flag at the gate of the fort and ringing a bell, and immediately away go the Russian traders, dragging along heavy bags of tobacco, kettles, hatchets, knives, and beads, vociferating noisily in praise of their goods, and in their eagerness often tumbling each other over in the deep snow. The Tchuktchi in the meanwhile remain standing by their sledges in dignified composure, and listen in silence to the torrent of words poured forth by their voluble customers, till an offer is made which they approve, when they agree to it at once.

The tent of a chief among the Tchuktchi may be distinguished by its greater size and height. It is generally pitched near a tree, on the branches of which hang bows, arrows, quivers, clothing, skins, and little household articles; while a few reindeer tethered near are feeding on fine moss, fires are burning in the tents and in the open air, and the people moving busily about, regardless of the intense cold.

The tents generally consist of two divisions, in the outer of which the fire is made; the inner one, called a *polog*, looks like a square box turned upside down, and is so low that persons inside can only sit on the ground, or move about on their hands and knees. It is lighted and warmed by a train-oil lamp, and is so close that the inhabitants usually strip themselves naked when they enter it, and it is scarcely possible for a civilised man to endure its pestiferous atmosphere for half an hour. The fair lasts three days, and then the Tchuktchi return home with their wives and children, and their conjurors—schamans as they are called—whom the people hold in great estimation, and consult on all important occasions, though they will sometimes beat them severely to induce them to withdraw an unfavourable prophecy. A terrible instance of the power of these Schamans occurred at the fair which took place in 1814. A sudden and violent malady had broken out among the Tchuktchi, and had killed not only many of the people, but also their reindeer, which they consider quite as great a misfortune. After the Schamans had done their best to find out a remedy, going through their whole stock of ceremonies, conjuring and drumming and jumping with all their might, they at last came to the decision that one of their most respected chiefs must be sacrificed to appease the angry spirits. For a good while the people refused to listen to their advice; but as the disease

continued to rage as violently as ever, and neither presents nor beatings would induce the conjurors to alter their opinion, the chief himself heroically declared that he would submit, and sacrifice his life for the good of his tribe. The attachment to him was however so great, that no one would put the sentence in execution, till at last he commanded his own son to perform the dreadful office of plunging a knife in his father's heart; and the poor untutored savage died the death of a brave man and a martyr.

THE

BOSJIEMEN OF THE AFRICAN DESERT.

FROM the deathlike aspect of Nature, in the Polar regions of North America and Asia, covered with an eternal shroud of snow,—from the dreary magnificence of Arctic seas, with vast masses of ice, tossed about like feathers amidst the foaming waters, or hurled with frightful violence against the shore,—let us turn to the land of the sun—the hot and glowing Africa; the land of dry and burning deserts; of abounding and marvellous fertility; the land of mystery and wonder, as it was, and is, and is to be.

In the time of the ancient Greeks it was said, "out of Africa comes always something new;" and, after the lapse of two thousand years, we still gaze with awe upon it, for it is still covered with a veil which no human hand has ever lifted. The space explored in Africa by European travellers, has been estimated as not much more than a fiftieth part of its whole extent; yet, for the investigation of no part

of the globe have such vast efforts been made as for that of Africa. But neither the passion for conquest, nor the thirst for gold, nor the ardour of scientific inquiry, nor the inspiration of pious enthusiasm, have ever been able to penetrate far into its mysterious depths. Between the shores of the Atlantic Ocean and the confines of Egypt, between the states on the east of the Mediterranean and the country north of the Cape of Good Hope, lie vast regions—millions of square miles—on which the foot of civilised man has never trod; peopled only by wild and barbarous hordes, or by animals, beautiful, strong, and terrible, as the fervid clime in which they have their birth.

It is impossible that any cultivated nation should exist in those unknown regions, as it was once imagined; for a cultivated nation spreads its influence far around it, and establishes relations with distant countries. It cannot remain hidden.

Africa lies almost wholly in the torrid zone, its extreme northern and southern points reaching only eleven or twelve degrees within the temperate; and the heat to which it is subject is increased by the nature of its soil, its boundless sandy wastes and naked rocks, which reflect vividly the scorching rays of the sun.

No inland seas, no far reaching gulfs or spacious bays, afford the means of communication with its central regions, as with those of other continents; and, from the only pas-

sage to them hitherto discovered—that of the river Quorra, falling into the Bight of Benin—Europeans are almost debarred access, by the dreadfully pestilential atmosphere of its mangrove-encumbered shores. On the eastern coasts, far-stretching, dangerous reefs; on almost every other, opposing currents, treacherous and tempestuous winds, and a tremendous surf,—render the approach difficult, and in many places almost impossible, to the navigator: and the continent, which contained a civilised people in the time of Moses, is still, over the greatest part of its extent, an untrodden wilderness. Traveller after traveller advances, urged by the desire of penetrating into its unfathomable mysteries; passes with a sigh or a prayer the bones of his predecessor, as they lie bleaching in the desert; and presses onward to perish in his turn,—

"Without a grave, unknelled, uncoffined, and alone."

Along the southern coast, ranges of mountains run nearly parallel to it, increasing gradually in height, and dividing the country into successive terraces, between which lie belts of fertile land, or vast barren plains. Beyond the second range, named the Black Mountains, lies what is called the Great Karroo, an arid desert, three hundred miles long, and a hundred broad, inhabited by no human creature, scarcely ever moistened by a shower of rain, exhibiting a surface of clay, thinly sprinkled over with sand, out of which a few parched and shrivelled plants faintly struggle

for their existence, against the fierce heats of one season, and the piercing cold of another. Northward of this, again, rises another—the highest mountain range of Southern Africa—the summits of which are covered by perpetual snow; and beyond this, for hundreds of miles, the country is tenanted by one of the poorest and most wretched races on the face of the earth, generally known as Bosjiemen or Bushmen, and most truly deserving the title of savages. Their condition, however, is rather that of a degraded and degenerate, than of a merely rude people; and they have undoubtedly been brought to it, in a great measure, by the oppression and cruelty of the early European settlers.

The natives of Southern Africa may be divided into two distinct families: the Bechuanas, to whom the Caffres are related, and who are rather barbarians than savages; and the Hottentot race, which includes the Bushmen.

About two hundred years ago, when their country was first visited by a European nation, the Dutch, these tribes were found extending over the whole tract between it and the Orange river. Even then they were in the lowest and rudest condition of human society, and that, though numerous, they were extremely feeble, might be inferred from the numbers of wild beasts that swarmed all over the country, and proved to be more serious antagonists to the new settlers than the native Hottentots. They possessed cattle, however; and they were therefore, at all events, better fed, than their de-

scendants, the wandering Bushmen; but they had, unfortunately, the passion for strong drinks, usual among savages; and, by indulging it, the Dutch completed their subjection. For a cask of brandy, the Hottentots would sell a district as large as three or four English counties; and thus they gradually sold, or were defrauded, of all their possessions; and were either reduced to slavery, or driven beyond the mountains, into the deserts over which the Bushman still wanders, and whose sterility appears typified in his stunted growth. A full grown man of this race is sometimes not more than four feet high, and scarcely ever exceeds five. The colour of their skins is naturally a yellowish brown; but it is so constantly covered by a thick coating of dirt and grease, and so blackened by the smoke of the fires, over which they sit cowering, that it can but seldom be seen. They have broad flat noses, high cheek-bones, and mostly ill-shaped corpulent figures; and the quick mistrustful glances of their small restless eyes, their gestures, and the way in which they snatch and devour their food, give them a painful resemblance to the apes of their country. Their strength is, considering their size, amazing; and their senses, like those of all wild hunters, exceedingly quick. No trace of intellect appears in their faces, and the ties of family are slighter than among almost any other savage people. The Bushman has no habitation, and it has even been said, not so much as a proper name. His whole time is spent in endeavour-

ing to satisfy his animal wants, and in wandering from place to place with this view; sometimes seeking shelter under a bush, or in the cave of a rock: and, when he can obtain a large supply of food, eating such a quantity, that he can do little else than sleep for weeks. The best habitation in which the wild Bushman is ever found, consists of a grass mat, bent into a semicircle, and fastened down by two sticks; and more frequently he finds a shelter in holes and caves, like those tenanted by the wild beasts of the country, whose life resembles his. "We discovered," says an African traveller, "a *kraal* of Bushmen. Their number did not exceed twenty, and their abode was merely a cavern in the side of a mountain, sheltered by huge impending crags. They had no earthly possessions, except the miserable bit of skin that hung round them, their bows and arrows, a knife, a few assagays, and two or three ostrich egg shells. Neither beads, or anything intended as ornament, were to be seen upon them; and their persons, meagre and filthy, too plainly announced that hunger had often been their lot." Except when any game was caught, which, they complained, seldom happened, the only procurable support of life was the wild roots they dug up in the plains; and these were not obtained without a long and wearisome search: the eggs of ants, the bodies of snakes or lizards, a tortoise, or an ostrich egg, met with accidentally, formed the only variety in their food.

Sometimes the Bushmen dig pits in the ground under the bushes, five or six inches deep, in which several grown persons and their children will lie huddled together in a heap under the sheepskins that form their only clothing. This kaross, as it is called, is worn as a mantle over the shoulders, and is usually accompanied by an apron of a similar material. They neither paint nor tattoo their skins, for the thick crust of dirt that covers them would conceal all such ornaments; but they adorn their necks and arms with the entrails of animals and pieces of ostrich egg shell, rounded and threaded on a string. Those who have had any intercourse with the colonists, however, add strings of beads, and copper and iron rings.

The weapon employed by the Bushman to destroy the animals on which he depends for a subsistence, is the poisoned arrow. His bow is of hard wood, generally about five feet long, and the string is made of the twisted sinews of some large animal. The arrow is a reed rather more than two feet long, and pointed with a piece of sharpened bone, or a three-cornered piece of iron, usually obtained by plunder from the Caffres, or other neighbouring tribes. The poison is of a brown colour, and about as thick as wax, and made from several substances; the preparation of this deadly mixture being the only art understood by these people. The ingredients are mixed in different proportions, according to the intention to attack men or

different animals; and the bushmen are extremely careful in the preparation not to touch it with their hands, stirring it with a stick in a hollowed stone. The arrows are often partly cut through, so that when they hit, the head may break off and remain in the wound. The Bushman has no idea of using fire to assist him in working the pieces of iron of which he intends to make arrow heads, and each one costs him a whole day's toil. He who knows best how to make an arrow head and prepare the poison, is the most intellectually distinguished among them.

When the prey is secured, it is in most instances immediately devoured. Six Bushmen have been seen to eat a sheep entirely up in an hour; and though they are often in want they seem to have no idea of preserving any food for future use. The animals too large for their arrows, such as the elephant and the hippopotamus, are generally taken in pits, dug along the sides of rivers, and carefully covered with leaves and grass, with sharp stakes planted in them, on which the poor beast falls. Ostrich eggs and several kinds of roots also afford nourishment to the Bushmen; and to obtain fish they make baskets of reeds and osiers, or harpoons of wood, pointed with bone, and fixed to ropes of twisted grass. Another method is to watch an opportunity when the water of the rivers is low, and build a weir on the strand, with stones and twigs, which, after having been covered by the water, is generally found full of fish.

Strange stories are told, on very good authority, of the Bushmen sharing in the prey obtained by the lion, inducing him to part with it by a judicious mixture of coaxing and threatening. An old man, whom Sir James Alexander questioned on the subject, described, in a dramatic style, the mode of proceeding on these occasions. The Bushman takes up his assegay, or spear, and walking backwards and forwards in front of the bush where the lion is too busily engaged with his booty to think of getting up, addresses him with,—"What have you come here for? Have you got anything to eat? You made such a noise, I thought you had got something. Can't you spare me some?" &c., and at last sits down opposite to the lion, and stares at him, till the lion, having eaten his fill, and becoming disgusted with this ill-bred intrusion on his dinner hour, retires and leaves the remainder to his troublesome visitor. It is to be presumed that the latter sometimes suffers for coming uninvited to the lion's table; but some of these savage children of the desert positively assert, that they live by what falls from it. "I let the lions follow the game," said one, who was found looking out for the traces of these animals; "they kill it, and eat their fill; then I go near, throw about my arms and my skins; the lions go away grumbling, and I get what they leave."

It must be confessed that, on these occasions, the beast

not the man appears most like the lord of the creation. Some of the largest animals ever seen in the world, have been found in the African deserts; and, as in many wild countries, the grandeur and beauty of the brutes is most strikingly contrasted with the poverty and weakness of man. Regarded merely as an animal, man is by no means the first of animals; it is only when he developes his true human nature, by the culture of his intellect and his immortal soul, that he obtains possession of his inheritance, —the mastery over the material world, to which he is destined by the Divine Author of his being. The lion, the elephant, the giraffe, the leopard, the rhinoceros, the ostrich, do not appear as subject to the native of southern Africa, but as waging with him an equal war, in which sometimes the one, and sometimes the other, party, has the advantage; and the cunning devices by which the man attains his ends, appear almost contemptible when compared with the bold attacks and tremendous struggles that take place between his fellow tenants of the wilderness. The battle of the lion and the giraffe has a sort of sublime horror in it: the lion often lies in wait for his gigantic antagonist among the reeds near a fountain, and when the beautiful and stately animal stoops to drink, springs upon his back. The terrified giraffe bounds away with his fearful rider, plunging frantically to shake off the terrible beast, whose teeth and claws are deeply fixed in his flesh,

and rushes on over the waste, till he falls exhausted to rise no more. Dreadful combats also take place between the elephant and the rhinoceros, who is one of the most formidable enemies the Bushman has to contend with. This animal resembles in form an immense hog; is often twelve feet long, and nine feet round, and weighs as much as half a dozen oxen. It has one or two horns placed on its nose, which are of immense strength, and a foot or a foot and a half long; and thick and clumsy as are his legs, they are so swift, that no man on whom he has once fixed his eye, can hope to escape him by running; and it is only by creeping stealthily among the bushes, or behind a lurking-place made with loose stones, that his human antagonist can ever venture to attack him.

Baboons and monkies, remarkable for their size, strength, and fierceness, are found all over Africa; the rivers abound with the enormous hippopotamus, which may be seen under the shady trees, or among the weeds, that fringe their banks, playing and rolling about, snorting and blowing as loud as a torrent among rocks. The description of the Behemoth in the Book of Job, has been supposed to refer to this enormous animal: "Behold now behemoth! His bones are as strong pieces of brass; his bones are like bars of iron. He lieth under the shady trees, in the cover of the reeds and fens. The willows of the brook compass him about. Behold, he drinketh

up a river; he trusteth that he can draw up Jordan into his mouth."

South Africa is not a thickly-wooded country, but there are, nevertheless, thousands of acres covered with large forest trees; and the flowers, of which there is the most splendid variety, are often on the same grand scale as the animals. There are lilies, the flower-stem of which is ten feet high, and an inch in diameter, supporting an umbel of twenty or thirty snowy white and crimson flowers; and the beautiful heaths shoot up to the size of trees. Of birds there are reckoned above five hundred kinds. Insects are, of course, excessively numerous; and of these, the locust, so formidable to cultivators of the ground, is welcomed by the Bushmen as affording an abundant supply of food. These creatures it is known appear in incalculable myriads. An instance is mentioned by the celebrated African traveller, Sir John Barrow, of the water of a wide river being hidden by the multitudes that floated on its surface; and it was calculated that the swarm must have covered a space of two thousand square miles. It is easy enough, of course, to catch with the hands as many of these insects as may be desired; and the Bushmen have also hit on the expedient of digging pits to contain a store for future use, almost the only example of this kind of foresight which has been noticed among them. Another kind of food much in favour

among the Bushmen, is the great white ant. These creatures build nests ten or twelve feet high, in clusters, that at a distance look like villages; but in the country of of the Bushmen, they more frequently undermine the ground, with passages running parallel to its surface, and crossing each other in all directions. A hole dug deeper than these passages, and cutting them through, is generally found full after a few hours. These insects, and several kinds of roots, which the Bushmen know where to find, enable them to support their existence when their attacks on the large animals have failed.

Besides the chase, they have also another means of subsistence, which brings them into very bad repute with their neighbours,—they plunder whenever they can find an opportunity: and are only prevented from being more dangerous, by being incapable, from their rudeness and ignorance, of associating together in large hordes. They are very cautious in conducting their predatory expeditions, never making any attempt of the kind till they have watched and lain in wait for a long time, and made every arrangement they can devise for their security. The first hours of the night, and generally the last quarter of the moon is a time chosen; that they may have the advantage of darkness to make their attack, and of moonlight when they are making their escape. They also prefer wet weather, as they well know that the fire-arms of the colonists

are most apt to miss during the rain. The Hottentots too, who are usually employed as herdsmen, are very susceptible to wet, and are often tempted to wrap themselves in their sheepskin dresses, and creep into some cave for shelter, leaving the cattle to take care of themselves. Their midnight assailants, however, not content with stealing the cattle, usually murder the careless herdsman in his sleep.

To the few travellers who pass across their country the Bushman is often dangerous, as his skin closely resembles in hue the dark coloured rocks among which he lurks, and the fatal poisoned arrow strikes before it is suspected that an enemy is in the path. They do not attach any notion of discredit to these actions, and, indeed, it does not seem that they understand what is meant by right and wrong: on the whole, perhaps, there is not on the face of the earth a race to be found whose condition is so low and wretched, if we judge of it by our own notions. When we speak of the wretchedness of a race, however, we use the expression only with reference to the superior happiness and comfort we know they are capable of. We must not suppose that each individual feels himself to be in a state of suffering; for custom has blunted his feelings to many things that would be most painful to persons in a different state; and he is doubtless capable of enjoyments which we can no more understand than if we were creatures of another element.

The Bushmen often dance in the moonlight from the setting to the rising of the sun, and it is said they are so much exhilirated on the approach of the first thunder storm after the winter, considering it as an infallible token that the summer has commenced, that they will tear their skin coverings in pieces in a sort of wild joy, and dance for several successive nights. The life of the Bushman is not embittered by what often occasions the worst sufferings of the poor among ourselves, the comparison of their state with one of greater affluence and apparent enjoyment. All are alike subject to hunger; all share alike in the feast. The Bushman takes no thought for the morrow, but is like the wild beasts of the desert, or, in the words of the Psalmist, like the "young lions roaring after their prey, who seek their meat from God."

Drawings of animals very neatly executed by the Bushmen have often been discovered in the caverns they have occupied; they seem to take pleasure in music, and shew gleams of intelligence and gratitude, which indicate that their condition, bad as it is, is not hopeless. Their cruelty is the natural consequence of their having been for many years hunted and shot down like wild beasts by the Dutch farmers, and of their precarious and dangerous mode of life.

THE REGION OF MANY ISLANDS, OR POLYNESIA.

SCARCELY a greater contrast can be imagined between tribes still in the earliest state of society, than that presented by the wanderer on the arid plains of Southern Africa, and the dwellers on the countless islands known generally by the names of Polynesia and Australasia. The vicinity of the ocean is mostly found to exercise a favourable influence in developing the intelligence of the people who reside on its shores; and more especially where they occupy not the coasts of a vast continent, but the islands of an Archipelago. The everlasting motion of the sea, its ebb and flood tides, the effects which it produces on its coasts, the strange substances which it often brings floating on its surface, attract attention more than the gradual and

silent changes that take place on plains in forests or among mountains.

The sea not only contains an illimitable quantity of food, but furnishes shells, stones, bones, and other things useful for the implements of which a rude people stand in need, and by which they are enabled to get possession of its hidden treasures.

The ancient Saxons and Britons, the Japanese, the Islanders of the Pacific, and the dwellers on the shores of the Arctic Ocean, have found on the sea beach the materials for their knives and hatchets, arrow heads and hammers, and all their earliest tools and weapons. The construction of the rudest canoe, in which it is possible to go to sea, requires a considerable amount of skill and industry; and when the little vessel is launched, it cannot be steered to any desired object without attending to the wind, the course of the waves, and many circumstances that keep the powers of observation constantly awake. We shall find, therefore, that races dwelling on the shores of the sea have advanced more rapidly than others differently situated, when neither have enjoyed the advantage of communication with a race in a superior condition. Of this we shall find many examples.

Beneath the mighty waters of the vast Pacific Ocean there exist immense ranges of mountains, mostly volcanic, the tops of which rising above the sea, appear as islands.

They are mostly overgrown with coral, and some are wholly the production of countless myriads of the coral insects, who, working below the water, rear their structures from the fathomless depths of ocean to the level of its highest waves. These islands, extending over a space that would contain three or four continents as large as Europe, are of very diversified form and appearance; some of the more recently formed being only covered with a scanty vegetation, whilst others have a deep fertile soil, and are rich in plants of the highest value for food. Some are low and flat; others exhibit every variety of hill and valley, rocky precipices, cataracts, and stupendous mountains, clothed with the superb foliage of the bread-fruit tree, the pandanus, or the waving plumes of the lofty and graceful cocoa-nut. Almost all the islands are surrounded, at the distance of a mile or more from the shore, by coral reefs, which protect them from the violence of the sea, and within which the water is calm and smooth, even when outside it is lashed into high and foaming waves. The long rolling billows of the Pacific, arrested by this barrier, rise ten or twelve feet above it, bend over their snowy tops, so as to form a liquid arch, glittering in the rays of the tropical sun as if studded with diamonds, and then break upon it with a hollow roar into foam and spray. There is usually an opening in these lines of reef, opposite to the streams of fresh water, that flow from the interior of the islands, affording an entrance for vessels to the spacious

natural harbour between the reef and the shore; and on either side of the opening are beautiful little fairy looking islets, lying like emeralds on the water, and rising only three or four feet above its surface. They are thickly clothed with shrubs and verdure; and, besides their beauty, are of great use to fishermen and mariners, in pointing out these openings. Many of these islands have never been visited by any European; many, no doubt, there are which have never yet been seen: some are inhabited only by pelicans and aquatic birds, some by isolated families, and others by a numerous population. All are, of course, not equally fertile; but none have yet been found where the inhabitants do not possess an abundance of the necessaries of life. For food they have multitudes of sea-fish—whales, porpoises, dolphins, bonitos, turtle, and almost every kind of shell-fish; salmon, eels, and other fish of a large size, abound in the rivers: and in the hollows of craggy rocks, or among the tall grass and reeds that border the shallow lagoons, multitudes of birds,—wild ducks, petrels, herons, and even albatrosses, build their nests, and lay their eggs. The woods and fresh streams are haunted by turtle-doves, pigeons, and many other birds; pigs, and dogs, which are also used for food, are numerous, and in no part of the world have so many nutritive and delicious roots and plants been found wild. The bread-fruit, the cocoa-nut, the banana, the arum, the yam, the sweet

potato, are all native plants; and oranges, shaddocks, grapes, pine apples, and figs, flourish abundantly where they have been introduced. The bread-fruit tree produces two or three valuable crops in a year; and the cocoa-nut tree, of equal importance for the subsistence of the Islanders, will flourish even on the barren sea-beach, amidst fragments of coral and sand, where its roots are washed by every tide. It grows sixty or seventy feet high, and bears six or seven bunches of nuts, of twenty or thirty nuts each. These yield a great variety of agreeable food, differing according to the time when it is gathered. At a very early stage it contains only liquid, clear, sweet, and slightly acid, like lemonade; in a few weeks it has a soft white pulp, like the white of an egg slightly boiled; afterwards this pulp becomes thicker and firmer, but in the state in which it is brought to England it would be considered spoiled. The arum, or taro, is a large solid root, ten or twelve inches long, and of which there are more than thirty different kinds; the yam is a pleasantly flavoured and very nourishing root; and the arrow-root, so well known in Europe, is also among the spontaneous productions of these islands. There are twenty kinds of bananas, producing large fine fruit; the sugar cane affords in its sweet and nourishing juice the means of satisfying both hunger and thirst; and there are many others equally agreeable and wholesome.

In the Kingsmill Islands, a group of fifteen islands

lying near the Equator, the natives are ingenious enough to make a preparation of the pandanus nut, which will keep good for years. The nuts are baked in the sun and pounded to dust, and then made up into rolls, eight or ten feet long, looking like brown stone, which serve as a resource in seasons when other food is less plentiful.

The rich vegetation of most of these islands also furnishes abundant materials for huts, canoes, clothing, and all other necessaries. The timber of the bread-fruit and cocoa-nut trees are as valuable as their fruit: and besides these, there is the apape, a stately tree growing forty or fifty feet high, with a crown of pale green leaves, and wood of a beautiful pink or salmon colour; the toa, a species of casuarina, the wood of which is extremely hard and durable, and when exposed to the air becomes dark brown or black; the tamanu, an evergreen tree, with leaves dark and shining like those of the laurel, and a wood like mahogany, especially useful for canoes, as it is said never to be perforated by insects. There is also the date tree (*ficus prolixa*), whose bark supplies cord for large, strong, and durable fishing nets, and the berries, a beautiful scarlet dye; and the candle-nut tree (*alurites triloba*), which, as well as the cocoa-nut tree, furnishes the natives with the means of obtaining light.

As material for clothing, the cocoa-nut tree supplies a kind of fibrous matting, that grows round the trunk, and

resembles coarse cloth. When very young, it is fine, glossy, and beautifully white, and is cut into strips, and used for decoration. The women also, in the more advanced islands, manufacture a cloth of the bark of the paper mulberry, the bread-fruit tree, and of the fibres of the aoa, a tree resembling in its growth the banian of the east. These manufactures are ornamented with brilliant colours prepared from native plants, and sometimes varnished with a sort of gum, that produces a gloss like that on English oil cloth. The inhabitants of the Palliser Islands make very fine and beautiful mats of a tough white grass, and which, though woven only with the hands, are as regular and even as if made in a loom. For a coarser kind of matting, for sails, or for sleeping on, the leaves of the different kinds of the pandanus are used.

The huts of the natives are built with stakes of the bread-fruit tree woven together with canes, and thatched with the leaves of the pandanus or palm. For the huts of the chiefs, the inside of the roof is often ornamented with braided cord of various colours, or finely fringed white and chequered matting. The furniture consists of a few low wooden stools, a trough and a stone pestle for beating the arum root into a sort of paste, which is a favourite article of food, some mats, and a few pillows stuffed with cotton, and spread on the floor. Round the walls hang bunches of fruit; and frequently, in a corner, lies a sow with

a litter of pigs. These huts are sometimes built very large, and occupied by a great number of families, sleeping in rows; and in one of the Kingsmill Islands was found what might be considered a splendid public building,—a council house, a hundred and twenty feet long and forty feet high, with a sloping roof that reached within three feet of the ground, and rested on blocks of white coral. The roof was thatched with beautiful neatness, and in the interior the rafters were painted in black bands, and adorned with ovula shells; the floor was covered with mats of the cocoa-nut leaf; and round the walls were ranged seats for the elders of the tribe, and for the chief or king.

The inhabitants of the islands of the Pacific are of two races, differing very much in appearance: the one short in stature, with dark skins, black woolly hair, and negro features like the people of New Guinea, and the islands in its neighbourhood; the other tall, much lighter in complexion, and with features more resembling those of Europeans. Some of the voyagers, who first visited them, speak in terms of warm admiration of the beauty of this race; of their slender and symmetrical figures, the tender transparency of their complexions, blooming, though brown, their brilliant expressive eyes, and fascinating smile; and though they do not all equal this description, many of them are unquestionably handsome, and we nowhere find among them the ugliness, painful to contem-

plate, which is so common among other wild tribes. That they possess in abundance all the necessaries of life we have seen: the climate of their country is delicious; clear, warm, and sunny, yet refreshed by gentle breezes; and no fierce blast, no venomous serpent, or tormenting insect, comes to disturb the delightful sensations it produces. Here, therefore, if any where, in a country and among a people so richly endowed, we might expect to find examples of that happy condition which has been called the "state of nature," and supposed by some fanciful persons to be a state superior in virtue and felicity to that of any civilised society. Yet on Tahaiti, one of the loveliest of these enchanting isles, the people were found plunged in the grossest barbarism and sensuality, seeming to live only for the gratification of their animal appetites; murdering the half of their children, slaughtering human victims with circumstances of terrible barbarity, as sacrifices to their idols, and practising many vices which it would be too painful to describe; the very blessings of their condition, and the facility with which they could obtain a subsistence, seeming to afford them only the means of licentiousness. In the absence of intellectual cultivation, or of the influence of a pure religion, leisure is too often devoted to low animal indulgence; and these islanders, like most individuals and nations by whom pleasure is made the chief object of life, became hard-hearted and cruel,

incapable of family affection, and regardless of the sufferings of others. Societies were formed, whose sole occupation it was to pass away the time in a perpetual round of idle and profligate diversions, and whose members bound themselves to destroy every child that was born among them; and, in their wars with each other, these beautiful and flower-crowned savages were, and still are, guilty of acts of dreadful ferocity. In a war which took place in an island of the Samoan group, so lately as the year 1830, a great fire was kept burning for several days after a battle, and hundreds of women and children were thrown alive into it.

There is reason to believe that at the time of the first discovery of these islands by Europeans, the people were in a declining state; for remains of habitations found in the midst of thickets, as well as the accounts of the people themselves, declared them to have been at one time much more populous: but the frequency of wars, of human sacrifices, and of the murder of children, had reduced them so rapidly, that it appears probable had no change taken place, that they might have been swept away altogether. A prophecy, indeed, existed among them, uttered by one of their priests, of the impending destruction of their race. "The tree shall grow, the coral shall spread, but man shall cease,"*

* Miss Martineau has alluded to this prediction in her tale called "Dawn Island."

he said; and many of the more observant of the natives thought, the denunciation likely to be fulfilled. In 1815, one of the chiefs declared, that the Missionaries had only come in time to behold the remnant of the nation. The practices which had probably caused this melancholy decrease in the numbers of the people, did not exist at an early period, but were comparatively recent; and in those islands where Christianity has been introduced, the population has again begun slowly to increase.

The inhabitants of the various groups of islands, are of course not all equally advanced; but their character has sometimes been too hastily set down by voyagers as amiable or ferocious, according to the reception they have themselves met with, but which was sometimes rather to be attributed to accidental circumstances, which had prepossessed the natives either in favour of, or against their white visiters, than to any real difference of character. In the group called by Captain Cook, the Friendly Islands, the natives of some, which, from the number of canoes and the many fires seen on the shore, are known to be thickly peopled, have lately shown so much hostility to vessels approaching their shores, that it has been found impossible to form any intimate acquaintance with them. From a group called the Navigators' Islands, at which the Russian Kotzebue touched on his last voyage round the world, and which, from their inviting appearance, he had the greatest

desire to visit, the natives surrounded the vessel in such throngs, and behaved in so fierce and daring a manner, that he was glad to get away his crew in safety, renouncing all thoughts of landing. They would have stormed the ship, but for the lances and bayonets of the sailors ranged round the deck; and some even succeeded in climbing into it, in spite of repeated and heavy blows, and had to be thrown overboard by main force. They seized with violence every thing they could lay their hands on; clung like cats to the sides of the vessel; and one even snapt at the bare arm of a sailor, giving signs not to be mistaken, that he would like to eat it. The features of these savages were handsome; but disfigured by an appearance of wildness and cruelty. Some wore their long black hair hanging down over the face and shoulders; others had it frizzled up under yellow caps; and some had it stained red, and curled over the shoulders like a full bottomed wig. They were not as much tattooed as the islanders of the Pacific generally are, but some were stained blue from the hip to the knee, giving them the appearance of wearing short breeches. They are very able mariners, seeming, when their canoes upset, to care very little about the matter, setting them right and jumping in again directly; and they display the greatest boldness and skill in guiding these fragile barks among the islands of this Archipelago. In the construction of these canoes, as well as of their habitations, and in

various arts and manufactures, the islanders of the Pacific are greatly more advanced than any other tribes in an uncivilised state.

The canoes belonging to the principal chiefs are fifty, sixty, or even seventy feet long, with a high prow and stern, and much ornamented with carving; and a fleet of thirty or forty together, forcibly reminds the spectator of those of the Greeks, approaching to the siege of Troy, or of the Northmen, sweeping across the German Ocean to ravage the coasts of Britain. Those intended for long voyages have masts, which are movable, and are raised only when the sails are used. These sails are made of the leaves of the pandanus, split into thin strips, and neatly woven into matting; for ropes the fibres of the cocoa-nut husk are used, or the twisted bark of the hibiscus, which is very good for the purpose; and, in some of the islands, every plank is carefully polished with pieces of fine coral, and the canoe decorated with streamers of various colours, tufts of fringe, and tassels of feathers.

These pretty little vessels are considered by Europeans as indifferent sea-boats; but the natives make long voyages in them, and have been known to return in safety after being at sea a fortnight or three weeks.

Fishing, an art on which a great part of the subsistence of these islanders depends, is in no part of the world practised with more skill; or, even before the introduction of

iron, with a greater variety of implements. They are extraordinarily dextrous in striking fish with the spear; and may often be seen standing on a projecting point of a coral reef, or rock, with the gigantic billows roaring and dashing around them, and striking with unerring aim such fish as are brought within their reach. Sometimes they carry on their fishery at night, by the light of the moon, or of torches; and long lines of rocks are illuminated by the ruddy glare, from which the bronze coloured figures of the fishermen, as they stand with their spears poised ready to strike, appear in picturesque relief. They have a great variety of hooks, made of hard-wood, shell, or bone—sometimes human bones; but no present is more acceptable to them than a parcel of nails, with which to make hooks of iron. The Tahaitians were so entirely unacquainted with this metal, that the first nails ever given to them were regarded as vegetable productions, and carefully sown in the ground, with a view to a future crop. Fishing is often practised just as much for the sake of amusement as for a subsistence; for in these fortunate islands the necessaries of life are so easily obtained, that a large portion of time is left for its embellishment and enjoyment. The beauty of the climate renders even clothing, for the sake of warmth, superfluous; and the ingenuity which among the inhabitants of cold countries is employed in procuring comfort, is here chiefly laid out in ornament. At dances, and scenes

of public festivity, which are of frequent occurrence, the natives wear a profusion of decorations; and as their delightful sunny seas offer the greatest inducement to frequent bathing, they have the additional charm of cleanliness, so rare amongst uncultivated nations. The toilet occupies, with both sexes, a great deal of the leisure time, of which they have so much. Groups of women may often be seen sitting under the shade of wide spreading trees, or by the side of a fountain, adorning their black, shining ringlets with wreaths of brilliant scarlet or yellow flowers, or their bosoms with fragrant necklaces of odoriferous plants. They even manufacture a kind of artificial flower, of petals and leaflets, saturated with a richly perfumed oil; and, so important is the art of arranging the hair considered, that among the deities of the Tahaitians was found a god of hair-dressers, whose assistance was often supplicated before commencing the labour of dressing for a grand party. The mirror in which the belle surveyed her charms, was a cocoa nut shell, full of clear water; but she found precisely the same pleasure in contemplating the image it reflected, as the less excusable fine lady in Pope's poem, who

> "Robed in white, adores
> With head uncovered the cosmetic powers."

The men do not usually wear flowers in their hair; but they braid it carefully, and wear ornamental head dresses

of bunches of beautiful red and green feathers; and, for a warrior's dress, these are sometimes fixed on a sort of helmet of wickerwork, to which are attached bunches of shells and pieces of mother-of-pearl. Round their waists are worn finely braided sashes, and on their breasts something like a military gorget, ingeniously worked with shells, and white and coloured feathers.

The most remarkable practice connected with dress and ornament is, that of tattooing, more or less prevalent among almost all savages; but nowhere carried to such an extent as in the islands of the Pacific. It is performed with a fish-bone, or other sharp instrument, which at the same time pierces the skin, and injects a colouring matter; and the operation is so painful, that little can be done at one time, and years sometimes elapse before a lady or gentleman, fond of dress, is tattooed to his or her satisfaction. The patterns for tattooing are more various than those employed by ladies amongst us for embroidery or Berlin-wool-work:—Dots, circles, lozenges, waving or zigzag lines, leaves, and flowers, and trees, and even groups of figures,—boys gathering fruit, and men engaged in battle,—as well as all kinds of animals, birds, beasts, or fish, spears, clubs, and other weapons, and sometimes even, sacrificial processions carrying victims to the temple. The women do not tattoo so much as the men, and scarcely ever on the face; but a favourite fashion

is to tattoo the feet and ankles, so as to give them the appearance of elegant opened-worked boots.

Life is altogether so easy among these people, that the women are of course not subject to the same personal hardships, nor compelled to the same amount of toil, as among other tribes in a rude state, but their position is equally degraded. Except among the islanders who have become Christians, of whom we are not now speaking, the wife is not allowed to partake of the same food as her husband, nor to eat in the same place, nor to prepare her food at the same fire. Even the baskets, in which the provisions for the men are kept, are considered as polluted if used by a woman.

The father and mother and children never assemble to eat a social meal, or enjoy the thousand innocent pleasures arising out of such a communion; and in this, as in other particulars, when we turn from the pleasing exterior, to the moral condition of these islanders, we experience the same disappointment.

The religion of the natives of these islands, although not of a character likely to produce any good influence on their lives, shows at all events a more active and inquiring spirit than that of any of the tribes we have hitherto spoken of. They have a great abundance of fables, by which they attempt to answer the great questions concerning the origin of the world and the human race, which

occur to almost every human being whose intelligence has been at all awakened; and they have temples, altars, idols, and a regular system of worship and sacrifice, of which fear appears to be the moving principle. The rites, as they are described, must bear much resemblance to those of the ancient Druids; they are performed in the deep shadow of umbrageous woods, where the dark temple, the grotesque and horrid forms of the idols, and the plaintive sounds of the moaning wind, inspire feelings of awe and dread. The sense of the existence of invisible powers is also manifested by these islanders, though in its lowest forms, by many superstitions,—such as the fear of meeting spirits, if they are out after dark. When this is unavoidable, they always take torches; and after their frequent merry-makings, the lights, carried by groups of the revellers, may be seen dispersing in all directions, and gleaming through the pretty cocoa-nut groves. The practice so frequent, of many families dwelling under the same roof, is said to originate in the same superstitious terror.

Some advances towards civil government have been made in most of these islands. Different classes of society exist; respect is paid to chiefs; there are forms of punishment for crime; and, in general, these people appear to be precisely in the state when the efforts of really enlightened, benevolent, and pious Europeans, might expect the most gratifying results.

THE

WILD INDIANS OF THE PRAIRIES.



F all the races of men still depending on the chase for a subsistence, and leading the wild and rude life which it necessitates, the Indians of North America certainly occupy the first rank, for bravery and intelligence, as well as for personal appearance, and for the number and value of their possessions, which, for savages, may be considered as positive wealth.

The country, lying between the Missouri river and the Rocky mountains, is, for thousands of miles, covered with an apparently boundless carpet of richest grass, over which roam the wild animals, the pursuit of which forms almost the sole occupation of its human inhabitants. Their number is not at present above two millions, as thousands have been

from time to time swept away, by the fatal ravages of contagious diseases mostly caught from their white neighbours. They are divided into great numbers of tribes, differing each from the other in small particulars of custom or dress, but all following nearly the same mode of life.

The Pawnees are a very powerful and warlike race, numbering about ten or twelve thousands, and divided into four bands, each having a chief, all of whom render obedience to the grand chief of the whole, who orders their movements. The Blackfeet Indians, occupying the country, near the sources of the Missouri, are said by those who have visited their country to be still more numerous. The Sioux Indians range over vast tracks, both east and west of the upper Missouri; and to the north of these are found the Chippeways, of whom the Ojibbeways, a party of whom were seen in London a year or two ago, form one tribe. Southward, towards Mexico and Texas, are the Osages and the Camanchees; and between them and the Missisippi, the Delawares, Cherokees, and others, whose condition, on account of the great intercourse carried on with the whites, is no longer that of the mere savage.

The wild tribes, although differing from each other in trifling particulars of manners or costume, all depend for food, clothing, and almost every necessary and luxury with which they are acquainted, upon the chase of the animal properly called the bison, but generally known as the

buffalo; although very unlike that on which the name was first bestowed, which inhabits the north of Asia. These vast regions are also stocked with herds of wild horses, which range from Mexico to Lake Winnipeg, and are of the greatest service to the Indians, in carrying their burdens, as well as in the still more important pursuit of their game.

As the hunting of the buffalo is the grand business of the Indians, they generally move six or eight times, in the course of a summer, to pursue the herds which move over these vast plains. Their tents, which are made of buffalo skins sewed together, and stretched over pine poles about twenty feet high, and placed so as to leave an opening at the top, can be taken down in a few minutes. A few hours before they are going to move, the chief of the village, consisting of as many as five or six hundred tents or lodges, sends messengers or criers to run through it, and announce his determination, as well as the hour fixed on. Some part of the poles are also withdrawn from his own tent, and part of its covering left flapping in the wind as a signal flag. Immediately after, the whole five hundred habitations are seen in movement; in a few minutes more they are all flat on the ground, and speedily packed on the backs of the horses, whilst the dogs, of which vast numbers are always running about an Indian village, are all secured, and the rest of the property dis-

posed in the order of march. The usual plan for carrying the goods and chattels is, to tie the tent poles together at one end, and then parting them into two bundles to throw them across the shoulders of a horse, leaving the other ends trailing behind. A pole is then tied across to keep them apart, and upon that is placed the tent, rolled up, and all the articles of household furniture or utensils the family is possessed of. On the top of this are mounted two, three, or sometimes four women and their children; a squaw is also mounted on the horse, generally with a child at her breast, and another behind clinging round her waist; whilst one walks before with a tremendous pack upon her back. Even the dogs are made to carry their load; and only the men canter along, unburdened, and at their ease. The procession moves off at dawn of day, and after proceeding slowly along, about twelve or fifteen miles, makes a halt. The women then unpack the horses and pitch the tents, for which the eldest woman chooses the ground that best pleases her, the principal chief occupying the centre of the village. Driving in the poles for the tent is a very fatiguing operation for them, as the ground is generally baked hard in the sun, and there is no iron pointed tool to aid the strength of their arms; as soon as this labour is performed they have to go in search of wood and water, which must often be fetched and carried on their backs, a distance of three or four miles. The squaw

has then to light the fire and cook the meat; and very frequently the halt lasts no longer than while the meal is taken, and all this hard labour has to be performed again in the evening.

If a herd of buffaloes is discovered whilst the procession is moving, the cry echoes through the columns, and a halt is immediately made; while various ceremonies are performed which are considered necessary to insure a good day's sport, or rather business. The warriors then go forward in advance of the main body to seek their game.

The buffalo, or bison, is a noble looking animal, larger than an ox, and of immense weight. Its colour varies between brown and black, and it has a magnificent shaggy mane, like that of a lion, covering its head and shoulders, and falling almost to the ground. The flesh is sometimes equal to the finest beef; but also not unfrequently so hard, tough, and stringy, as to defy civilised teeth to chew it. These animals roam in immense herds over the western parts of America, from the borders of Mexico to the shores of Hudson's Bay; and bear, consequently, a great variety of climate, from the extreme cold of those northern regions, to almost tropical heat,—Nature providing for the change by increasing the thickness of their fur as winter approaches. In the seasons when they assemble, thousands of them may be seen blackening the rich green of the prairie, or wheeling, plunging, and pawing about, amidst clouds of dust,



BUFFALO HUNTING BY THE INDIANS OF NORTH AMERICA.

raised by desperate conflicts; while their raving and bellowing is heard miles of, like distant thunder. In the heats of summer, oppressed by the abundance of their hairy covering, they seek out the wet, low grounds; where they plunge their huge heads and horns down amidst the wet grass, and work them round till they have formed a hollow, into which the water drips from the saturated soil around. The buffalo then throws himself on his side, and, with his shoulders and his hump, forces himself violently round, ploughing up the ground, and sinking deeper and deeper into the miry pool which he has made, until he becomes almost entirely covered. When he has sufficiently cooled his sides, he raises up his enormous bulk covered with mud, and makes way for, or is driven out by, a stronger comrade, envious of his luxurious wallow.

The Indians attack these creatures with bows and arrows, and a thong of raw hide, ten or fifteen yards long, to throw over the neck of the animal they are pursuing. In the winter they follow the buffalo over the surface of the snow, in their snow shoes, which keep them up, while the immense weight of the buffalo sinks him to the middle of his sides; and in the hollows and ravines, where the drifted snow lies very deep, it often falls an easy prey.

As buffaloes enough are generally killed in the autumn to last for food all through the winter, they are destroyed at this season merely for the sake of the fur, or *robes* as

they are called, as the hair on them is then longest, and most abundant. The greater part of these are not used by the Indians, or their families, but sold to the fur-traders, often for no better price than a pint of whiskey each. Upwards of two hundred thousand of these noble creatures are annually thus destroyed, and their bodies left to decay where they have fallen, merely to furnish to the civilised parts of America an article of no real service, and inferior in value and beauty to many manufactures easily and cheaply obtained. This wasteful improvidence is much to be regretted, not only on account of the poor animals themselves, but for the sake of the Indians, to whom they are of the highest utility. The skin serves as a covering for huts or lodges, for canoes, for beds, for dresses, for saddles and bridles, for whips and thongs; the horns are made into ladles and spoons; the bones into saddle-trees, war-clubs, and tools and implements of various kinds; the sinews make bow-strings and thread; the hoofs glue, for fastening arrow-points, and other purposes.

From the size and strength of this animal, it is of course not taken without a desperate resistance. A huge buffalo-bull, wounded and turning upon his enemy, his eyes glaring and blood-shot, his long shaggy mane stiffened up, his mouth open, and his nostrils sending forth streams of smoke and blood, is one of the most terrible of foes; and, to encounter him successfully, an Indian must possess a great

amount both of courage and skill, as well as good weapons. Arrows are said to be more effectual against them than fire-arms, as they generally pierce very deep, and hinder the movements of the wounded creature much more than a rifle ball. Sometimes the hairy monsters come rushing on with headlong speed, in a close column, thundering down the steep declivities; sometimes they scatter in all directions, tearing over everything that comes in their way, or rolling over lifeless, under the numerous shots of their enemies. Each hunter mostly singles out some one object of pursuit, and then begins a race, which it is impossible to say who will win. If the buffalo is wounded, without being disabled, it perhaps becomes the pursuer in its turn. On flies the swift horse with his rider, knowing it is for his life; and close at its flank, shaking the earth with his tread —with glaring, fiery eyes, tail erect, and steaming nostrils— comes his formidable foe. The termination of the chase is, of course, a scene of disgusting slaughter,—men, women, and children, are engaged in skinning and cutting up the immense animals, that lie bleeding all around; and not unfrequently, if they have previously suffered a long fast, devouring large portions of the raw flesh. The greater part is then cut into large pieces, rolled in the skin, and packed on the horses, to be carried to the camp.

An Indian summer camp is an interesting and picturesque scene.

"Upon an extensive prairie, gently sloping down to a creek," says the Honourable C. Murray, who spent some months among the Pawnees, "the winding course of which was marked by a broken line of wood, here and there interspersed with a fine clump of trees, were about five thousand savages, inclusive of women and children. Some were sitting under their buffalo-skin lodges, lazily smoking their pipes, while the women were stooping over their fires, busily employed in preparing meat and maize for the lords of the creation. Far as the eye could reach were scattered herds of horses, watched by urchins whose whole dress and equipment was nothing more than the bow and arrow, with which they exercised their infant archery upon the heads of the taller flowers, or any luckless blackbird perching near them. Here and there might be seen some gay, young warrior, ambling along the heights, his painted form partially exposed to view, as his bright scarlet blanket waved in the breeze, while his small, fretful horse, was scarcely to be recognised under the variety of trappings, with which the vanity of his rider had decked him out. Near him might be seen another naked savage, without a saddle, and his only bridle a thong round his horse's head, galloping at full speed, and waving in his extended right hand a *laryette* or thong, with which he was chasing some refractory mule or runaway steed, who had escaped from his gang: while the banks of the stream were alive with

the garrulous voices of women,—some washing themselves, their clothes, or their infants; others carrying water to the camp; and others bearing on their backs a load of wood, the portage of which no London coal-heaver would have envied them."

Around the inside of the tent, the various packages, saddles, &c., are usually ranged in a semicircular form, to a height of two or three feet; and, in fine weather, the front is left open. Every occupant has his assigned place, and sleeps upon his own blanket or buffalo robe; every warrior having his bow and quiver suspended above his head. Before the tent, raised upon three poles, is a kind of shield, reminding one of the armorial bearings of European chivalry, and bearing the device of each chief; and from the interior, near the centre, is suspended a mysterious article, regarded as sacred, on which is bestowed the name of the "Medicine," as it has been translated, but which has a much more important and solemn meaning than belongs to the word among us. Not only everything connected with the cure of diseases, but all that is wonderful, incomprehensible, or sacred, is denominated "Medicine." The gun is called the "medicine weapon;" the horse, among tribes of Indians not familiar with it, was known as the "medicine quadruped;" and the name for the Deity, in one Indian language, was a word meaning "Big Medicine Man."

Every tribe has its "medicine" or mystery man, who, besides carrying on a great deal of business in dealings with the supernatural world, is regularly called in to prescribe for the sick, and paid as a physician. After he has exhausted his stock of prescriptions, of roots and herbs, he has recourse in obstinate cases to a grand conjuration; he arrays himself in a most extraordinary fantastic and frightful looking costume, made up of the head and skin of a grisly bear, beneath which his own is concealed, and attached to which are the skins of snakes, frogs, and bats' beaks, claws and tails of birds, horns of deer, goats, and antelopes, and odds and ends of every animal he is acquainted with. In one hand he shakes a rattle that makes a loud and terrible noise, in the other he brandishes his magic wand; round his wrists dangle the huge claws of the animal whose skin he wears, and he makes his *entrée* into the apartment of the patient, yelling and leaping and growling and snarling, so as to keep up the character of the bear much better than physicians among ourselves with whom it has been sometimes fashionable to assume it. If the case is so obstinate as to resist this application, the doctor dances off again, declaring, as doctors sometimes do when they fail, that it was the will of the Great Spirit that the patient should die, and that the system of medical treatment was not in fault.

Most Indians have what they call their "medicine bags,"

filled with bones, feathers, and other odd matters, to which they attach much importance: and they often hold some particular animal in a kind of mysterious reverence, calling it their medicine; and nothing will induce them to kill or to eat when killed, the animal to which this notion is attached.

Sometimes they imagine themselves under the peculiar guardianship of a tutelary spirit who assumes the shape of a particular beast; and in times of danger, or when their passions are excited, they will imitate this creature, creeping about and growling like a bear, or roaring and stamping like a buffalo.

The life of the Indians of the Prairies, like that of all tribes, who depend for their subsistence on the precarious pursuits of hunting or fishing, is subject to seasons of severe scarcity; but, after a successful chase, they devote whole days and nights to a course of such tremendous stuffing, with such quantities, of scarcely half roasted meat, or boiled corn, as would kill five times the number of civilised men. On such occasions four or five grand dinner parties sometimes succeed each other on the same day; and every guest eats of the first as if there were to be no second, and of the last as if there had been no first; without counting many pounds of solid steaks devoured in the course of business, during the cutting up and drying the meat for the winter. Children, three years old, whom

their mothers are still suckling, will devour, three or four times a day, enormous meals of half-boiled corn or meat; and, it is extremely probable, that the terrible devastating effects of some inflammatory maladies among these people may have been occasioned or much aggravated by their alternations of long fasts and prodigious gormandizing.

The ceremonial of these banquets is usually to send a boy round as messenger to the invited persons, who merely mentions the name of the chief by whom he is sent, and then stands perfectly still, till the guest rises and follows him. It does not appear that "a previous engagement," or any other excuse, is often pleaded for not accepting the invitation. The party, when assembled, is seated on the ground in two long rows, and between every guest and his *vis-a-vis* is placed a large wooden bowl of meat or maize, and two spoons made of buffalo horn. The speeches do not, as with us, follow, but precede the repast; a plan which is likely to have many advantages in improving the quality, as well as shortening the duration, of the oratory; and they usually commence with an eulogium on the giver of the feast. The first spoonful is set aside and divided into two portions: the larger, for an offering to the subordinate spirit, the buffalo, or bear; the smaller, to the Great Spirit. The master then turns to the east, bows three times, raising and lowering his hands, after which comes the grand charge upon the viands; the rule of politeness being,

if possible, to leave nothing for the next day; although, in some cases, a portion is sent to the women, who, not only do not share in the banquets, but never eat with their husbands at all, taking their meals after him in company with the children and *dogs*.

The Indians of the Prairies, although they do not consider it extraordinary or scandalous to appear naked, often wear a quantity of elaborately ornamented clothing, made of the skins of the buffalo and deer, to which a white or coloured blanket is a welcome addition, when the Indian has been fortunate enough to obtain furs enough to exchange for one with the white traders on the American frontier. The preparation of the skins is of course the business of the women; and for a few days after a successful chase, an Indian camp resembles a great workshop, the squaws being busily engaged in stretching them out on the ground, and fastening them down with wooden pegs, after they have been first well soaked in water, mixed with ashes. Each skin is then covered with the brains of the buffalo from which it has been taken, as this is thought to render it soft and pliant, and the hair is scraped off with a sharp piece of bone.

These buffalo robes are often richly painted and ornamented with porcupine quills; though, for a chief, a still more admired decoration is, a fringe of the black locks of the victims whom he has slain. The Mocassins

or boots, are also ingeniously worked, and even the coverings of tents are fringed or decorated. On festal occasions the Indians wear an immense number of trappings, and, in general, clothes are regarded as matters of state more than of decency, and thrown off when it is found convenient. Almost all ornaments are appropriated by the men, and the most inveterate dandy of London or Paris would be almost ashamed to bestow as much pains on his toilette as the young warriors of a tribe of wild Indians. They grease their whole bodies, paint their heads, which are generally shaved all but one long tuft at the top, rouge their faces, adorn their breasts and shoulders with stripes of various colours, and ears, arms, and legs, with strings of beads, teeth, rings, brass nails, and all the rattletraps they can get hold of; and mostly carry a little pocket mirror in which to survey their beauties, when they are fortunate enough to obtain such a treasure from the white country.

As an over fondness for finery is a folly, naturally arising out of a low and uncultivated state of mind, it need not, perhaps, surprise us to meet with it among a people in this uncivilised condition; but what appears oddest is, to find that which among ourselves is regarded as a feminine failing, so entirely confined to the men. All that the poor squaws have to do with finery is to manufacture it for the use of their masters; their own dress is extremely

plain; and even their long black hair hangs down without ornament, while the heads of their husbands are covered with all the showy decorations they can carry.

The vanity of the men occasioned them to take great offence when a traveller* proposed to paint the portraits of their wives as well as their own. If he chose to paint women and children, he was told, the sooner he destroyed their pictures the better; and the intense anxiety they showed concerning the representations of their own features exceeded that of the vainest sitters who ever worried one of our fashionable portrait painters. An Indian will lie down from morning till night before his likeness, admiring it and guarding it from the slightest accident; although it must be alleged as some excuse that he has a notion of a mysterious connection existing between the condition of the portrait, and the safety of his own health and life.

One great distinction of these Indians above any tribes hitherto spoken of is, the use of a kind of hieroglyphic, either as a means of correspondence or as a record of the events of their lives. On the inner bark of the white birch or skins prepared for the purpose, certain remarkable objects are drawn or painted in such a manner as to tell the story to those who understand their manner of writing. If, for instance, the subject was the surprise of

* The American, Mr. Catlin.

a party of hunters by their enemies, and their being rescued by some white allies,—they would first draw the tracks of the buffalo, and, following them, as many footsteps as there were hunters: or, if the party were too large for this, one for every ten; then the number of enemies would be drawn in the same manner, with the emblem or crest of their chief, such as a wolf for a Pawnee, &c. The rescuing party would be distinguished by their national flag; the number of their own party slain, by the footsteps, painted black, or partly so if only wounded; the killed of the enemy's party would be painted red. The place where the affair happened,—a prairie, a wood, or the bank of a river, would be described by appropriate marks. Paintings of this kind are frequently made in the buffalo skins, worn as clothing; as well as plans of the respective hunting grounds, with their boundaries; and sometimes very correct maps of the country, with its rivers and hills and remarkable incidents, are registered in the same manner on smooth barked trees or soft rocks.

Nothing like government exists among these Indians, for the authority of the chiefs appears to extend no further than directing the movements of the hunting or war parties. On one occasion, mentioned by Mr. Murray, when a young warrior, the chief's own son, was guilty, in a moment of passion, of an act of atrocious cruelty, although the father looked on in evident displeasure, he did not attempt to

interfere; since the young man was grown up, and admitted among the number of the "braves," as the fighting men are called. The only regulation among them, at all resembling the laws of a civilised society, is the appointment of a certain class of men, whose business it is to watch the buffalo herds and the encampment, and to prevent any individual of their own or any other tribe from hunting without permission. The apparent respect paid to the elder and more experienced warriors, is continued no longer than when they are in full possession of their strength; when they become infirm and decrepit, it is a custom among many of the prairie tribes either to kill their parents, or leave them in the wilderness to starve. The resignation of the aged to this, which they regard as their inevitable lot, is wonderful. A traveller before referred to,* who spent eight years among them, found on the banks of the Upper Missouri, a venerable, white-haired chief of nearly a hundred years old, who had once been a man of distinction in his tribe, left almost naked to starve, or be torn to pieces by wolves. A few sticks of wood were placed within his reach, as he sat shivering by the side of a small fire, but uttering no complaint. "I am too feeble to march," he said; "my nation is poor, and must go where they can get meat. My eyes are dim, my strength is gone, and I wish to die." This cruel

* Mr. Catlin.

desertion of those who have the best claim on their care and attention, the oppression and ill-treatment of women, the dreadful tortures inflicted on fallen foes, are sufficient to show that, with all his fine natural qualities, the son of the prairie is still a savage. Mounted on his stately war-horse fully equipped, his bow and quiver slung, his shield upon his arm, his long lance glittering in the sun, he may bear some outward resemblance to a knight of the days of European chivalry, but the resemblance goes no further; or if it does, it is rather to the faults of the knightly character, its fierceness, and its indomitable pride. In all that constitutes its excellence and glory, its gentleness and courtesy to the weak and helpless, its generous forbearance towards vanquished enemies, its lofty regard to truth, the handsome Indian of the Prairie is as far below it as any other savage. Whatever may be his capabilities of improvement, it is idle to represent him as possessed of qualities which are never found in a rude state of society, but are the blossoms of religious culture and social refinement.

The love of truth is so far from being a general characteristic, that those who have had good opportunities of observing them, have declared, that they never met elsewhere such determined and audacious liars; boys being often, as among some rude tribes of antiquity, even taught to lie and steal, and only punished when they are found out.

The quality of self-esteem, in all its forms, and with its good and bad consequences, is one greatly encouraged among them. The "braves," as they lie wrapped in their buffalo skins before the fire, in the intervals of hunting and sleeping, generally amuse their leisure by chanting the praises of their own valour: "I rushed upon my enemy like a buffalo; I shouted my war-cry aloud; I took his scalp. The women howl for him in his lodge. I am the great war chief," &c. This is ludicrous enough; but the same feeling often assumes the form of what is called among us "self respect," and is productive of as much nobleness of character and behaviour as can well be raised upon so equivocal a foundation. The only true basis of excellence is humility,—

> "That low sweet root,
> From which all heavenly virtues spring;"

and though self respect, in its true signification, need not exclude this, the line is easily overlooked which divides it from pride and self-sufficiency, the sources of almost all that is evil.

The Indian is unquestionably possessed of courage and fortitude in a high degree; for he will endure without a murmur almost incredible hardships, and bear the worst tortures an enemy can inflict, not merely unshrinkingly, but with exulting defiance, his spirit rising heroically

superior to the sufferings of the flesh. This courage will nevertheless often fail him on trivial occasions where his pride is not concerned; and he will roar and howl for a tooth-ache or a pain in the stomach, in a manner that we should think disgraceful to a child.

Individuals have indeed been met with among these, as well as among tribes in a still lower condition, with whom noble and beautiful qualities, rare everywhere, seemed to spring up spontaneously; "who, having no light, were a light unto themselves:" but it would be a pernicious error to represent such qualities as generally characteristic of a condition of profound ignorance. That these virtues are not always possessed by those called cultivated and Christian people, merely shows, that they are not cultivated and Christian enough; and by no means that they would be more likely to possess them had they been born on the Buffalo Plains of Western America.

Perhaps the great source of the superiority of these Indians to most other savages is, the higher ideas on the subject of religion, which, notwithstanding many odd and absurd superstitions, are universally prevalent amongst them. They believe in one Supreme God, and in the immortality of the soul, although they acknowledge subordinate divinities; two of whom are supposed to reside in the sun and moon: they also believe in an evil spirit, whom they endeavour to appease by prayer and sacrifice.

They worship no idols, and to the Great Spirit they offer thanks for benefits conferred; but ask for nothing, saying he is the best judge of what they need. The North American Indian believes also that not only man, but the lower animals, possess immortal souls, and may look forward to a future, happier state of being.

"Simple Nature to his hopes has given,
Behind the cloud-topped hill some humble heaven,—
Some safer land, in depth of woods embraced,
Some happier island in the watery waste:
He thinks, admitted to that equal sky,
His faithful dog shall bear him company."

CONCLUSION.

IN the foregoing Sketches of Primitive Races, we have not attempted to give a complete enumeration of all the people still existing in the earliest condition of human society; and have purposely avoided speaking of such tribes as have been much mixed up with colonists, or have carried on very frequent intercourse with more advanced nations. It is sufficient for our purpose if we have seen what are the general characteristics of savage life, in various circumstances of climate and situation. We have seen that it involves the absence of almost all that renders life dear and valuable to those in a more advanced condition; and is too often, in the words of a quaint old writer, "solitary, poore, nasty, and brutish."

The lowest state of a human creature presents, however, many important distinctions from that of the highest

and most sagacious of the inferior animals; and it is often most interesting to trace, in the rude attempts of savages, the germs of the noblest triumphs of human intellect and power.

No race has yet been discovered so ignorant as to be unacquainted with the uses of fire, or the mode of procuring it; and everywhere,—in the centre of vast continents, or on the shores of the sea, among mountains or islands, on the frozen plains within the Arctic circle, or in the recesses of tropical forests, it is considered equally as a first necessary of life. From the tedious and laborious method of producing it by rubbing together forcibly and for a long time, two dry pieces of wood, to the use of Congreve matches, and other means of obtaining fire instantaneously, there is almost as much difference as in the purposes to which it is applied,—from procuring warmth or cooking food, to that of moulding almost every material substance, and giving birth to the almost all-powerful agency of steam.

Among the Polar nations which are the most exposed to cold, the use of fire is nearly limited to the purposes of cooking; since, as we have seen, the necessary warmth is sought for in suitable clothing, and no great fires are made in their habitations.

It would seem probable that the earliest inhabitants of the earth subsisted chiefly on its spontaneous productions,

—fruits and roots, and juicy berries; but whatever may have been the mode of life in those beautiful regions that formed the cradle of our race, where—

> "The soil untilled,
> Poured forth spontaneous and abundant harvests;
> The forests cast their fruits in husks or rind,
> Yielding sweet kernels or delicious pulp,
> Smooth oil, cool milk, and unfermented wine—"

the most primitive races now existing live chiefly on animal food. This requires preparation by fire, and the method first practised is that of roasting or broiling on the open fire, as usual among the Forest Indians of South America, the Australians, the Fuegians, and others in a similar state. Baking in pits dug in the earth, and previously heated, is an improved method practised by the more advanced tribes of North America and the islands of the Pacific. Corn, the most important of all articles of food to civilised nations, is comparatively little used among any people who can be regarded as savages, and to most is wholly unknown. Milk is an article known only among pastoral and agricultural nations who have learnt the advantage of keeping animals in a domestic state; to the mere hunter or fisher, it is an unattainable luxury. The earliest drink of man is of course the water of rivers and springs; and so all-important has it been deemed, that among many nations of antiquity,—the

Hindoos, Greeks, and Romans, the ancient Germans, and others,—it was regarded as a more immediate and sacred gift of Heaven than any kind of food. Worship was paid to the divinities that were supposed to dwell in springs and fountains; and legends of holy wells have been preserved through the middle ages down almost to our own time.

It is natural to seek some sheltered spot where to obtain the rest which is as indispensable as food. The Forest Indian of South America contents himself with a screen made of a few palm leaves; the Bushman with a sheepskin, and the shelter of a stunted shrub; the Australian seeks a hollow in a rock; the dweller in Arctic lands builds himself a home of ice and snow: and from such beginnings as these, have proceeded the marble palaces of Greece and Rome, and the gorgeous edifices of modern Europe.

The use of clothing is, as we have seen, by no means so universal as that of fire; but wherever it is felt, the skins of animals offer the readiest material; and when a little progress has been made, rushes, leaves, grass, and the threads of fibrous plants are woven into matting: the manufacture of garments from hair or feathers requires a higher degree of art, but still one far inferior to what is required for spinning or weaving cotton, wool, or silk.

The desire of decoration, of increasing, or altering his

natural form, of changing the colour of his hair or the skin, is found among human creatures in a savage state as well as among those who, perhaps, regard themselves as in the highest state of civilisation. The shells, bits of wood, or human teeth, which come first to hand as ornaments, are gradually exchanged for plumes and glittering diadems; and the bones or bits of wood, stuck through noses and lips, for earrings and necklaces: but the principle of both is the same. The truest distinction of civilised over uncivilised people, in personal adornment, is their superior cleanliness.

The earliest tools made by man are, weapons: the spear and the stick on plains, the bow and arrow in forests, and almost everywhere the club,—which, as a knowledge of metals, is acquired, becomes gradually improved into the sword or other more effectual implement of destruction.

Domestic utensils are first found ready made in the shells of large nuts, of birds, and tortoises; and, after many attempts, a tolerable imitation of some of these is produced from bark, wood, or clay, which become gradually refined into exquisite manufactures of glass and porcelain.

The construction of a vessel, in which to traverse an element naturally fatal to human life, is, in the rudest beginnings, a great triumph of ingenuity; but in nothing has more wonderful progress been shown than from the canoe,

hollowed out of the trunk of a tree, or made of a few pieces of bark sewed together, or the bones and skin of a walrus, to the splendid machinery of the ship or steamboat; although this, in its turn, will perhaps be superseded by more perfect inventions, and the mighty agencies of steam be discarded for some other more subtile and powerful agent.

While we rejoice, however, over these and similar evidences of the progress our race has made, we must not forget that all the improvements in arts and manufactures, in the conveniences and luxuries of life, are chiefly valuable as affording the means of better spiritual culture. The first step towards this is the formation of society; the simplest and earliest is that of the family, the grandest and most complete that of a great nation.

Most of the tribes we have been considering carry their association no further. Each must depend on their own exertions for all that they have need of; must make their own weapons, kill their own game, build their own habitations, and defend themselves against whatever accidents they may be exposed to. But it sometimes happens when the animals are of great size and strength, especially if they are found in herds, like the buffaloes of the North American Prairies, the association of a considerable number of hunters is necessary to attack them successfully; and thus a number of families are induced to live and hunt in

company, and form a tribe. One tribe in its wanderings meets with another, and disputes arise as to which has the best right to pursue the animals found on a certain tract. Such disputes are not easily settled, and often lead to quarrels; and it is found necessary to choose a chief, who may act as a leader in the wars that follow, and to pay some obedience to his commands.

This is the present state of the Wild Indians of North America, and no people, who are mere hunters and fishers, are likely to possess any better form of society or government.

In this state we also find the earliest dawnings of the religious feeling, the belief in the existence of a some higher invisible power, which forms the truest and most certain distinction between man and the lower animals. This feeling first manifests itself in the form of fear; for among savages as well as too often among civilised men, all daily blessings,—existence itself, light, and warmth, and food, come as matters of course, and attract no attention; but a sudden tempest, or any hostile and destructive force acting occasionally, and at uncertain times, awakens anxiety and fear. Success in the chase, or any other pursuit, is ascribed by the hunter to his own skill, strength, or valour; his failure and misfortunes, to the action of an invisible foe. In seeking to discover the causes of success or failure, he takes notice of the external circumstances

that may have accompanied each, the animal he had killed, the weapon he had used, the bird or other creature he may have met with, and ascribes to one or the other a beneficent or an injurious effect. He remembers these experiences, and communicates them to others; and the aged men and women, who are no longer able to take their part in active toils, but who have collected a large stock of such knowledge, acquire by means of it a certain influence, and are naturally consulted as to the best means of averting any dreaded calamity. Other individuals also acquire a similar power, by devoting their attention to the subject, and practising such devices as are considered effectual in averting evil omens, and procuring the favour of the unseen powers. Such are the Medicine Men of the Indians, and the Sorcerers and Sorceresses that we find among all people in a similar state, among whom religion has never proceeded much further.

The first dawnings of the fine arts also, of poetry, painting, and music, which form so powerful an instrument of civilisation and culture, may often be discovered among people in the rudest state. The warrior returning home relates the story of his exploits, and accompanies and illustrates the narrative with imitations of the looks and gestures with which he terrified his enemies; the recital re-awakens the feelings that accompanied them; and we have here the origin of epic, dramatic, and lyric poetry.

The regular and beautiful forms and colours of animals and plants, of shells and flowers, are noticed, as the truly human faculties of the wild man awaken from their slumber. He feels the impulse to attempt an imitation of them: his first efforts are perhaps bestowed on his own person, that he may appear pleasing in the eyes of his companions; or, if his condition is still too rude for such a feeling, he puts on the attributes of a fierce beast, the claws of the bear, the horns of the buffalo, to strike terror into his enemies. By degrees he comes to extend his love of ornament to the weapons or implements he uses. He polishes his bow; and cuts zigzags, triangles, and other straight-lined figures on his spear or his club. The natives of some of the islands of the Pacific adorn their oars with high-raised figures; cut the handles of their knives into the forms of men and animals; and decorate, with carving and painting, the heads of their canoes, and the beams that support their dwellings. From these imperfect attempts to express a notion of beauty, have gradually arisen the exquisite productions of the fine arts, in which the purest and sublimest emotions of our nature find fit utterance.

In considering the character of savage life, our first emotions are not unfrequently of sorrow and pity for what appear to us the sufferings inevitably connected with it; and, as far as these sufferings are occasioned by vice or malignant passion, there may be cause for such a feeling.

But if they consist merely in hardship and privation, we may remember that Providence kindly adapts the feelings of every creature very much to the position in which it is placed.

To ameliorate the condition of these poor savages, to awaken their intellects, to soften the ferocity of their manners, to raise them in the scale of humanity, is unquestionably the duty of the civilised nations of the earth; but we must not suppose that He, whose mercy is over all his works, has in the meantime left the inhabitants of the vast regions still tenanted by savages, a prey to hopeless wretchedness.

As far as mere happiness is concerned, the wealthy lady or gentleman of modern Europe, surrounded even to superfluity, with all the means and appurtenances of convenience and luxury, is often no happier—sometimes far less happy—than the poor savage, who knows not even their names; and who, if he occasionally suffer hunger, at all events enjoys the food which rewards the toil that procures it. But happiness is not the sole end of our being. It would not be sufficient if all the world could at once be enabled to live a life of ease and enjoyment. Our Creator has bestowed on us the privilege of improving, by our own efforts, the condition of the world around us, as well as of ennobling our own nature, and unfolding its higher faculties and powers, so as to fit ourselves for a nobler state of being.

This end can never be attained in a rude condition of society; but, on the contrary, demands a more perfect state of cultivation than any that has yet been seen, and which it is our duty to forward by every means in our power. At the same time we may be assured, that in living for such an object, we shall obtain the best chance of happiness this world affords, and fit ourselves for a better in that which is to come.

